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MEDITATIONS

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MEDITATIONS

ON THE

SACRED PASSION

OF OUR LORD

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BY

CARDINAL WISEMAN

THIRD EDITION

LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LIMITED
NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROTHERS
1909

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PREFACE

THE Passion of our Lord is the School of Saints. To have understood His Passion, to have lived in it, is to become absorbed and mastered by a great love. Nothing is difficult or impossible to love. He who loves not cannot realise the power of love. The Passion is the patent proof of God's love for men. That proof must be examined in detail, if it is to be brought home to our heart. The Passion is summed up in the Crucifix. When the Crucifix stands out before our eyes we contemplate the greatest manifestation of God's love for man. But to understand the Crucifix aright we must have travelled through the stages of the Passion. Neither shall we understand the living mystery of God's love for us in the Eucharist unless we have understood the mystery of the Passion. The Passion and the Eucharist are the two great proofs of Divine love for man, and

the third is made up of His personal dealings with our own soul.

The publication of Cardinal Wiseman's Meditations on the Passion, now that the history of his life has been given to the world, is most opportune. Many will be glad to take him as their guide and companion during the six weeks of Lent, and to be taught by him how to contemplate the Sufferings of our Blessed Lord, and how to make them their own.

While he was Rector of the English College in Rome he used to rise very early, and write out each morning a meditation, which he then read to the students when they came down to the Chapel. I remember well his often speaking to me in London of the interest he had taken in providing the mind of his young levites with suitable material on which to meditate and form their spiritual life. He was naturally inclined to build up a system; he was an intellectual architect; he loved, too, to decorate and embellish all that he took in hand. Thus, his plan was to build up the Spiritual life of the students upon

a somewhat elaborate method which he drew up with great care. Each week was to impress upon the mind one of the great eternal truths, one of the moral or ecclesiastical virtues, an incident from the hidden or the public Life of our Lord, a mystery from the Passion, and a characteristic in the life of the Blessed Virgin or a motive for devotion to her. In this way he thought that all of these great verities, virtues, and mysteries would become equally imbedded in the soul during the forty weeks or so, for which he had drawn out a series of meditations upon each of them. The system was perhaps a little more fanciful and speculative than practical and real. It is hardly in this methodical, I had almost said arbitrary, way, that the soul loves to drink in and absorb the doctrines and devotions that are to become its nourishment and its very life. We prefer longer draughts, we like to drink in the touching and pathetic truths of the Passion, not on one day in the week, but for consecutive weeks together. We like to follow our Blessed Lord's hidden and public life with-

out break or interruption. We take our Blessed Lady and we do not wish to leave her until we have possessed ourselves of her as a whole, or in her full relationship to us. So of the great eternal truths, so of other homogeneous subjects. I well remember hearing many years ago, in a great French Seminary, that one of the directors had spent the morning's meditation during the whole of Lent—not on a round of topics, nor even on the mysteries of the Passion, but—upon these three words, "*Jesus autem tacebat.*" It is not, however, necessary to condemn one system, because we may personally prefer another. "Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum."

Shortly after the Cardinal's death, the first volume of the series of "Meditations" alluded to was given to the public. The second volume still remains in manuscript.

I think that the publishers have been well advised to put together a handy book made up of the Cardinal's Meditations on the Passion, and to offer it to the public for service during the forty days of Lent. About half of these meditations were pub-

lished, as I have said, some thirty years ago, and are to-day out of print; the others are published now for the first time. The characteristic of these meditations, as indeed of most of Cardinal Wiseman's writings, is that you will nearly always find in them a "hidden gem." The beauty and richness of his mind seemed to illustrate and justify every topic he treated by suddenly striking some vein of thought or some point of feeling which, if not new, is at least presented in a new light or reference. Thus, even where there is much that is trite and familiar, you will suddenly come upon a gem which will more than compensate for any sense of labour or defect in style.

HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1898.

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MEDITATIONS

ON THE SACRED PASSION

First Meditation

ON DEVOTION TO OUR SAVIOUR'S PASSION

1. Reflect that the Christian can have no true devotion at all, if he have it not for the sufferings and death of Christ. For we can have no true devotion without love, its only true foundation. And can we love God without loving in a most special manner our Divine Redeemer, bleeding and suffering for the love of us? Is there any other consideration that will move us to a deep and ardent affection when this has failed? Whoever therefore loves his God, considered in the amiable character of his Redeemer, who saved him at so much cost, must often turn his heart and affection

towards the spectacle which this purchase presents him, and love to dwell upon it with overflowing gratitude and melting affection. The Passion of his dear Jesus will be the daintiest though the daily food of his best feelings, and he will feast upon it at all times and in all places. The Cross will be to him what the Law was to the Jew, his meditation sitting down in his house or going on his journey, coming in and going out; it will be more and more before and between his eyes, not merely by being mechanically imprinted on his forehead by his hand, but by being the scope and aim of all his actions, the tendency of his desires, the object of his love. His crucified Redeemer will ever appear before him, giving him the standard of his affections, the rule of his actions, the measure of his words. Every one of these will be found of just tally and weight, if estimated by the Cross. His actions will be all performed at its foot and under the eyes of his dear crucified Lord. He will not strain his mind or weary his imagination, by vainly striving after some concep-

tion of God's infinite majesty ever present and witnessing his actions; he will rather see Him as He was on Calvary, visible to the outward sense, benign, meek, afflicted, and suffering cruelly for his sins. Oh, when we contemplate Him thus, how powerless will all temptation be! how shall we despise all its attempts to make us commit anything displeasing to Him, who is displaying for us such an excess of love? Oh, how trifling will our affections be when endured in company of Him who, mocked, scourged, and crowned with thorns, has been hanging for three hours in torment upon a cross for love of us, and asks us to bear with our passing and light affliction for His dear sake! And then, how humble shall we be in such a Presence! When we see the Lord of Glory, the King of Heaven, the eternal son of the Father, thus debased into the form of a servant, thus degraded into a worm and no man, thus trampled upon and humbled even unto the death of the Cross, how will the highest honours or the loudest praise, or the most widely spread glory be able to elate us or to

seduce our heart? No; he who loves the Passion of His Saviour, he who makes it the recurring subject of his meditations and the unceasing object of his love, will be ever fixed in the service of his God, through good report and evil report, through prosperity and adversity, through life and in death. And at this last extremity in particular, his devotion to his crucified Jesus shall return with comfortable hope, to cheer the gloom of his last hour, and to bring him before the face of Him he loveth.

2. Reflect how it is good for us, at stated seasons, to concentrate these sentiments and give ourselves up exclusively to the contemplation of this scene. Throughout the year we may wander with our affections from place to place, and, like the patriarchs, pitch our tents first on one then on another of our sacred mountains. Sometimes we will pause at Horeb and consider its miracles and mysteries, when God sent Moses on his mighty commission to save His people; at others, we will stay on Sinai and meditate on the terms of its Law; we will remain a while with Elias upon Carmel,

and then ascend Thabor, to contemplate its glorious visions. But every year it is good for us to dwell for a time on those three "mountains of myrrh," of bitterness and sorrow, Olivet, Sion, and Calvary. There may we make three tabernacles for our souls, and spend a few days in the study of their varied but affecting spectacles. The Jews were obliged more than once a year to go up to Jerusalem, there to commemorate the blessings bestowed upon them by God in their deliverance; and shall we, who have been redeemed by Him with so strong a hand as was required to wrestle with death and hell, forget once in the year to put aside all other thoughts and go thither where our Blessed Saviour is engaged in the awful struggle, the issue whereof is to be our salvation? Shall we, like His timid and faint-hearted apostles, sleep while He fights and prays in mortal agony, and hear from His lips His reproachful words, "Non potestis una hora vigilare mecum?" Or not rather demean ourselves during those solemn hours, as to be addressed by Him in those flattering

expressions, "Vos estis qui permansistis mecum in tentationibus meis"? Surely we should be confounded at our unfeeling ingratitude, were we to allow such neglect and coldness to come upon us. How wise and provident, then, it has been on the part of Christ's Church thus to put aside this time for the dedication of our thoughts and our feelings to the contemplation of Jesus, her Divine Spouse, in His bitter Passion. This holy season serves thus to revive our faith and our devotion, so as to give us a new stock of fervour for the rest of the year. We meet it like a watered spot in the midst of the wilderness through which we yearly travel, as an Elim in which are "twelve fountains and seventy palm trees" (Exod. xv. 27), where we may halt for a longer and fuller refreshment. There we may draw waters with joy from the fountains of our Saviour, from His sacred wounds, whence life ever flows. There we may dwell in deep devotion upon His infinite mercies, His unspeakable goodness, His unlimited self-devotion to our God. And surely we, in return, shall

endeavour to our utmost to meet it with a corresponding return.

3. *Affections.*—"I will sit at the foot of Thy Cross, O Blessed Jesus, during these days, as Respha did opposite those of her children, and feed my heart with the spectacle, though cruel it be, of love. I will nourish myself in earnest and deep devotion towards Thee, who hast not spared Thy soul, but hast given Thyself up to death for my good. From head to foot Thou art all mine, Thy gift is written in letters of blood, yea deeply engraved upon every part of Thy sacred body; Thou hast written us upon Thy hands, that our memorial may be ever before Thee. Then be Thou, crucified, ever before us, not in visible representations, but by being sculptured in our hearts. Take to Thyself our thoughts, which we here consecrate to Thee in Thy Passion. Take all our desires, which we wish to unite with Thee in the Garden, our model of resignation and conformity. Take our affections and inclinations, mortified and scourged with Thee at the pillar. Take our abilities and natural

gifts, that their pride, with Thy sacred Head, may be ever hedged round with thorns to check its aspiring ideas. Take our bodies, that they may with Thee bear the Cross, which they have deserved. Crucify in fine with Thee all our affections, our entire selves, that nothing more may remain to us, but all be devoted exclusively and eternally to Thee, our love, our hope, our Saviour."

Second Meditation

ON LOVE TOWARDS JESUS IN HIS PASSION

1. Reflect how unbounded should be our love of our dear Saviour in His Passion. For surely the love which He bears and displays for us there knows no limits. "Greater love than this no man hath, than that a man should lay down his life for his friends." His love admitted of no cold reasonings, or calculations of our deserts, or how we should requite Him; but rather foreseeing how wretched our return would

be, He still loved us, and loved us to the excess of dying for us. Our love cannot have that infinite intensity which His had, but at least, so far as our weakness allows, let us seek to break down the barriers and limitations which earthly affections put to our feelings towards Him, and love Him to the possible extent of all our powers. This is loving Him with all our strength. Further, our love, to be anything like His, should be unreserved in its devotion. For He kept back nothing from us. He gave His body to stripes and bruises, and His soul to afflictions and sorrow. He allowed His head to be crowned with thorns, and His thoughts to be racked with bitter grief. He permitted His hands and feet to be pierced with nails, and His affections to be cruelly outraged. He surrendered His property to His very garments up to the spoiler, and His reputation to the calumniator. He gave Himself, in short, entire, a *holocaust* for us, keeping nothing for Himself, so that when He died He was the poorest, the abjectest, the most defamed, the most suffering, and the most abandoned

of men! And all this for love of us, of me! And how can we, for very shame, reserve from Him so many affections, so many desires, such a large portion of our hearts? How can we retain an attachment for our worldly goods, for honours, for men's praise, or any other such miserable and perishable objects, not an insignificant but a principal share of our desires and attachments? More still, His love was most practical and active. Here, indeed, He did not content Himself, as we do, with sounding protestations of affection, by repeating to us that He loved us; but He showed it in facts, in deed. And here, indeed, He proved to us that the best demonstration of the activity of love is given by suffering. Other men show it by exertion for their friends, He by endurance. Others travel far, or toil much, to serve them; He suffered Himself to be torn in pieces, and at length to be put to a cruel death to redeem them. And shall we be so unwilling to undergo the smallest trouble for His sake, or to serve and love Him, if thereby we are brought into the slightest affliction? Oh let us

learn to love as we have been loved; if not in measure, at least in kind!

2. Reflect how well we may all learn in the Passion of our dear Saviour in what manner we may love Him if we will only, by simple meditation, enter into the feelings of those who then stood near him with an affectionate heart. The first and dearest of all is the Mother of Love, Mary, whose feelings of compassionate love it would be impossible for human intelligence to attempt to fathom. For who can imagine the addition to even maternal affection which the sight of One so beloved, and so worthy of it, enduring extreme suffering must have made? For if the heart of this blessed Virgin was pierced by a sword on this occasion, it was indeed by a double-edged sword, sharpened on one side by grief and on the other by love; and the sharpness of each was in proportion to the other's. No: she did not love Him as much, when He was a smiling babe at Bethlehem, all fair and unstained by blood or tears, as she does now this Man of griefs, covered with wounds and disfigured by His own blood.

She who had suffered no maternal throes in bringing Him into the world, who had no pains to forget in the joy of birth because a Man was born (John xvi. 21) has the bitterer pangs to endure of seeing Him most cruelly taken from her sight, and learns the motherhood of pain in the death, not in the birth, of her first-born. Here is the model for us of pure sympathetic love towards Jesus in His sufferings, the strongest, the perfectest which could possibly be felt by human heart. Next to her we see John, the well-beloved, the friend who had leaned only the night before upon that Bosom, over which so many streams of blood are tracking their course, and which so many cruel stripes have furrowed. How must he have looked back upon that happy hour, and wept to see Him whom his soul so loved reduced to so wretched a plight, so sadly altered, so frightfully mangled, so cruelly slain! Oh how did this Boanerges, this son of thunder, feel his breast rent between the contending claims of tenderness and zeal, melting now into a maiden's grief, and then bursting forth into those

more ardent thoughts, which once wished fire to be called from heaven to consume those who merely were unbelieving towards his Master! His was a love of zeal, of earnest yet most tender friendship. But alas! it is but too probable that we must seek the patterns of our love in another class, among the repenting sinners. Look, then, at that woman who weeps fearlessly after Jesus as He carries His cross, who, in the face of a licentious soldiery and of a brutal rabble, takes her stand at the foot of the cross, and keeps her ground there; though she has no claim of relationship, as other pious women have, for its Blessed Sufferer. See how she clings to the ignominious tree, and sobs aloud, and proclaims her love and her adoration of Him whom a crowd of priests and scribes are insulting. This is Magdalen, the much-forgiven, and consequently the much-loving. She shows us how we who have sinned and have obtained pardon, ought to assist at the Passion of Jesus, when seeing that blood, and those wounds which purchased for us our forgiveness and redemption. But if yet un-

certain whether we have obtained grace, yet struck with consciousness of guilt, remorse, and shame, we draw nigh to our Saviour's Passion, let us think how Peter felt towards his Master; how, although he had not yet from His mouth assurance of pardon, he blessed Him for that first look of mercy which had awakened remorse and brought him to himself. Oh, how did he abhor himself for the additional pang he had given his loving Friend in his Passion, by his conduct the night before! How did he sigh and weep, to remember how he had treated that God, who from the midst of so many outrages looked upon him with such a mild yet piercing eye of mercy! Never had he felt for Him such love as now.

3. *Affections.* — "And so, dear Jesus, make me ever love Thee, suffering and dying, with a love of grateful contrition, a compound of thankfulness for what Thou hast forgiven me, and of hearty grief for all I have committed. Ah! too deeply have I offended Thee, too barbarously have I taken part in making Thee suffer, for me ever to

love Thee without some bitterness of sorrow and remorse mingling with my love. The days are past for me in which I could stand at the foot of Thy Cross in the company, and with the unreproachful feelings of Mary and John, but I must needs be content to remain among those who, at sight of Thee dying, struck their breasts in compunction. Still in that sorrow let there be much love; let there be that deep shame which Peter felt when he remembered not so much his own baseness as thy lovingness and mercifulness towards him, and wept bitterly, not that he had been a traitor, but that he had been one to Thee. Let my sorrow be like Magdalen's, all love, burning love, such as heeds no reproach of men, no scorn, no ridicule. Let me ever feel how heavy the debt I owe Thee for so much forgiveness, and how I never can in return love to excess."

Third Meditation

ON THE LESSONS OF THE PASSION

1. Reflect how in the Passion of our Blessed Saviour are concentrated all the difficult virtues which He practised during His life, those in which we most decidedly wanted an instructor and a model. For to begin with the very virtues of childhood and youth, the first and principal of these was necessarily docility and obedience, such as is recorded in the Gospel, when we are told that He went to Nazareth with His blessed parents, and was subject to them. Now in His Passion He may truly be said to have pushed those amiable virtues to their furthest imaginable extent. When do we most admire the obedience of Isaac? Is it not when we see him bearing the wood on his shoulders, whereon he was to be immolated? And still more when he allowed himself, without a murmur, to be thereon bound? What, then, shall we say of the obedience of this our Isaac of the New Law, who now humbles himself, being

made obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? that is, in pursuance to the commands of His eternal Father, submitting himself to the cruellest, most ignominious death that could be then inflicted? But in order to accomplish this act of obedience dear to Him from His reverence for the authority that enjoined it, He was obliged to submit to many others of so degrading, so revolting a nature, that none but the most perfect virtue could have undergone without a loathing repugnance. Isaac went up the mountain by his father's side, cheered and encouraged by him. The servants were left below; no profane hand was laid upon him. It was his own dear father's voice that urged him to lie down on the funeral pile. But Jesus was made obedient to all the wicked ministers of Satan, that had a part in the infliction of His sufferings, to Pilate and to Herod, to Caiphas and to Annas, to the Jewish mob, and to the Roman soldiery. To the commands of each, though they were only to His infamy and pain, He subjected Himself, like a lamb before his shearer, without

opening His mouth. In like manner did He display all the virtues that had distinguished His public life. His disinterested readiness to do good was clearly manifested in His healing of Malchus; His readiness to receive all repentant sinners in His treatment of the penitent thief; His desire to instruct men in His address to the pious women, in His conduct when among the Jews he boldly acknowledged Himself upon the adjuration of the High Priest. In like manner did He exhibit Himself perfect in all those virtues which seemed to belong to times of peace, and to suppose the reverence and docility of men. They are not those which we might expect to find amidst desolation and abandonment, amidst bonds and scourges, at the pillar or on the cross. How are we here taught? That under no variety of circumstances, under no pressure of misfortune, sorrow, or pain, are we to think ourselves dispensed from the faithful practice of every virtue which the Christian profession, or the ecclesiastical state, requires from us. But there are other traits of virtue which go even beyond these, and

show how even to the end of life He could go on increasing in the manifestation of wisdom and grace before God and men. Where in His whole life shall we find so beautiful an instance of kindness, and willingness to reclaim those that had gone astray, as in His treatment of Peter? Where did He display filial affection to His dear mother equal to that which He demonstrated upon the cross? Where did He show such charity and willingness to forgive His enemies as in His last prayer for those that crucified Him? Who shall ever sufficiently study or adequately learn these beautiful lessons?

2. Reflect, if our Blessed Redeemer taught us so much of those virtues which belonged to all His life, in His death and Passion, how much more must He have given us an example of such as belong more exclusively to a state of affliction, of trial, and of suffering? Indeed it may be justly said that if, throughout His life, He wanted not occasion of exercising resignation, patience, meekness, and forgivingness, yet He reserved the full manifestation of these

singular virtues for its close, to form the last grand triumph of the Divine power over the feebleness of humanity. Men had suffered before His time with extraordinary patience. Jeremiah had been persecuted by the ungrateful people whom he endeavoured to save. Yet could he not refrain from pouring out his complaints to God against their unjust treatment, and even praying that He would repay them according to their deserts. Job was a still more perfect example of patience, proposed to us by St. James, even in the New Law, as a model every way worthy of our imitation. Still, Job, when taxed by his friends with having merited his sufferings, entered upon his defence and, with some warmth, repelled the charge. The Son of God, on the contrary, gave the first example of true perfect patience, of suffering every excess of infliction in body and mind, in reputation and soul, without opening His mouth to complain, or to obtain the slightest mitigation of what He had to endure. See Him from head to foot one unbroken wound! See Him in spirit desolate, disconsolate! in

property more truly stripped to nakedness than Job! not seated indeed upon a dunghill, but stretched upon a hard cross! not soothing the smart of a leprous sore with a potsherd, but enduring the unalleviated torture of a frame gashed and gored in every part, inflamed into additional anguish by the air and heat! Hear Him provoked by a clamorous rabble, by taunting priests, by apostate followers, by blaspheming soldiers, by doubting friends, to clear His character, and remove the imputations that seem naturally to attach to Him! See Him more powerfully tempted, not only by the interrogatories of Pilate, but by the afflictions and tears of those whom He loves, of John particularly and Mary, whose character appears involved in His, as much as her afflictions depend upon His own. Yet not a word escapes His lips of vindication or complaint. Meek and silent to the end, He bears the entire load placed upon Him by His Father's hand, and bears it to the end. If He speaks it is to comfort, to pray, to forgive. What a school is this for us to learn in! how deep, yet how consoling

its lessons! how should we draw nigh to it in all our afflictions, in our inward trials, in our desolation of spirit, in our disappointments or bereavements! Christ then died truly leaving us an example how we too should suffer. He has taught us that perfect patience which seeks no relief in complaint or self-vindication, but throws itself entirely into the arms of God, humbling us beneath His powerful Hand, and acknowledging the justice of His sentence.

3. *Affections.*—"How shall I sufficiently thank Thee, my dearest Lord, for this kind remembrance of my welfare, that led Thee thus to teach me by word and deed lessons which must cost Thee so dear? For any diminution of Thy sufferings would have appeared, in some sort, to diminish in like proportion the immensity of Thy meekness and patience. It is recorded of an ancient artist that he made model or canon of perfection in the human frame, drawing all the proportions of exact symmetry and grace from all that he could discover fairest in nature, that so he might have before him a type of perfect beauty, by which his

works might be ever regulated. And if in this vale of tears there be one state rather than another that requires the guidance of some blessed examples, it is that most common yet most difficult one of affliction and trial. And here hast Thou, thrice Blessed Jesus, put together all the beautiful virtues which display perfection in that terrible season, and having formed them into an exquisite model in Thyself, hast elevated it above us, and placed it before our eyes, that we may ever study it, and transfer to ourselves, so far as our frailty will allow us, its exact image. Let me daily apply myself to this study, and let me ever improve by the contemplation of Thee upon Thy cross."

Fourth Meditation

ON THE LAST SUPPER

1. Reflect how the Church of God, having for the whole of Passiontide turned the attention of her children to the contemplation of her Lord's sufferings and death,

in general; throughout the three last days of Holy Week passes historically through all their parts, and as in a sacred drama sets before our thoughts and hearts the minute details of the mighty work of our Redemption. But Maundy Thursday seems as a day marked with white in the calendar of mourning days. The Church for a few hours resumes her bridal garments, she sounds forth unwonted hymns of joy, gives utterance to her musical harmonies, and even dresses in white the ensign of Redemption upon her altars. Why this brief but pathetic burst of gladness? Is it that she wishes to produce a more moving contrast with the plunge into deeper sorrow that shall immediately follow, the stripping of her altars of even their plainest and most necessary furniture, the extinguishing of her lamps even before the shrines of her dearest martyrs, the removal of her bread of life, the object of her perpetual adoration, from her tabernacles? No, surely; for although such a transient gleam of joy must greatly deepen the gloom of sorrow that will anon succeed it, yet would not

the Church of the Lamb disguise her feelings for any such artificial effects. It is that she hath amidst the melancholy recollections of the Passion, one that cannot be commemorated save in gratitude and with praise. This is the institution of those adorable mysteries wherein He perpetuated the Commemoration, and applied the fruits of His Redemption to our souls. Let us then dwell with tenderness upon this His parting scene. Behold Him in the chamber of the Pasch, reclining at table, amidst His Apostles, yet unconscious of the sorrowful scenes about to ensue. They are as the youthful olives about the table of their Lord, all except one on whom a premature blight hath descended, and who seems blasted and withered by the curse of Heaven. Yet only to the instructed eye of faith and to the piercing glance of Jesus is this "spot in their banquet" (Jude 12) visible, so that it interrupts not their joy. Look on the scene through the heart of John, who reclines upon the bosom of his Lord. Long had they, as well as Jesus, desired

with anxious desire to eat this Passover, wherein they had to receive the promised Bread of Life. The moment is come: the breast of the world's Redeemer seems to heave with the expansion of love, about to manifest itself with new magnificence! Into His spotless Hands He takes the bread, and as He blesses it, how glows His heavenly Countenance turned towards heaven, what mild yet glowing rays of love dart from His eyes! How strangely mingled do awe and affection fill the hearts of the silent Apostles! How do they hold their breath, overpowered by the contending affections that so intensely absorb every other faculty! With what deep astonishment they hear the solemn words, "This is My Body." How reverently they take the proffered morsel, and feel themselves incorporated with their Lord! What unwonted sweetness pervades their souls! What a new life and spirit seems to have been infused into their entire being! Then when He takes the cup, and in like manner blesses it and distributes it, with those wonder-working words, "This is My Blood," oh!

how is all their ecstacy renewed, how the sacred draught seems to penetrate in glowing streams through all their veins, fraught with peace, with tenderness, and love! Oh, who would not have given the world to have been a partaker of that first Communion in the Church of God, to have received the Food of Life and the Cup of Salvation from the Blessed Hands of Jesus, consecrated by His own lips?

2. Reflect how our Blessed Lord proceeded, after this testimony of His love, to give us all a novel example of humility, such as the world had never seen. For rising from table, taking off His upper garments, and girding Himself with a towel, He washed the feet of His disciples, one by one. Imagine therefore to yourself the utter astonishment of these men upon seeing their Lord, whom they believed to be the true Messiah, the Son of God, condescending to an act usually performed by menial servants. How their hearts must have melted, each in his turn, when they saw Him kneeling before them, respectfully taking hold of their feet, and humbly

washing and wiping them! So overcome were they, that not one of them had courage to express his feelings, but passively submitted to the display of His humility. But when He came to Peter it was not so. He knew his own demerits; once before, when Jesus had favoured him by the miraculous draught of fishes, he had reverently come before Him, and said in the fulness of His heart, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." If he did not think himself worthy to be in the company of his Lord, what must he have thought of having his feet washed by Him! His heart could not stand it. "Domine, tu lavas mihi pedes?" he asks in amazement. *Thou*, so great, so powerful, so pure and holy, wash the feet of so lowly, so mean, so sinful a creature as I am? And even when Jesus insisted, he still held out, exclaiming; "Non lavabis mihi pedes in æternum." So that it required all the authority of his Divine Master to enforce his submission. But when this warm-hearted disciple spoke thus, he was at least free from sin. "He that is

washed," says our Blessed Lord to him, "needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean throughout. And you are clean, but not all" (John xiii. 10). If therefore so strong were the feelings of the clean at seeing themselves so treated by Jesus, what must we suppose *his* to have been, who forms the exception here implied? Surely Judas, conscious of the black guilt which he harboured in his bosom, aware that the penetrating eye of Jesus had fully discovered it, must have sat uneasy in his place, as he saw his turn approach. It would not be from fear that the meek Lamb of God would betray him to the indignation of his companions; it was not that he feared lest Jesus should pass him by, and thus show him to be the exception He meant, but rather he dreaded the contact of those Blessed Hands, he recoiled from the idea of being affectionately, nay, reverently served by one whom he was about to use so foully. He thinks of Magdalen, whom he had churlishly reproved for doing towards Jesus much the same as Jesus is about to do for him; he feels how the

sinner's place is at the feet of the offended Lord, and not as now the very reverse. Surely humanity must have abandoned the heart of Judas, and gone to nestle in the rocks that rent at our Lord's crucifixion, that he did not start from his seat, and casting himself on the ground, insist not merely as Peter had done on declining the honour intended him, but on washing the feet of Christ, as Mary had done, with tears. But turn away from him and look rather at your Blessed Lord. Oh, unparalleled humility of the Son of God! Oh, unheard-of abasement of the King of Heaven! "Formam servi accipiens" in truth almost more than elsewhere, "Semetipsum exinanivit," He debased, He lowered Himself below conception. Oh, contemplate Him in silence kneeling at the feet of Judas, His own betrayer, who even at that moment was plotting His destruction. Did not an involuntary shudder pass over His frame, as He took into His hands those accursed feet, so swift to shed His blood, and which in a few hours will bear their Master to the halter and the precipice?

No; with the same meekness, with the same affectionate look and manner, as He had washed the feet of John the beloved, He washes those of the execrable traitor!

3. *Affections.*—"O blessed festival, dear to the Christian's loving thoughts! so full of moving recollections, so rich in mysteries of graciousness and kindness to us poor sinners! O holy-banquet day, when for the first time the Table of God was spread with the delicacies of kings, and wisdom called aloud to the poor and the simple to come and eat! We hasten to it with joy and alacrity. We come, Lord Jesus, faint and weary, to be refreshed by Thee. Our communion this day shall be in gratitude for all that Thou hast suffered for us, and in reparation to Thee for the scandals and injuries committed against Thy adorable body, by Christians, parallel only to those committed against it by the Jews, on this night of Thy Passion. We will transport ourselves to the supper-room of Jerusalem, and try to copy the feelings of Thy adoring disciples: we will receive Thee with reverential love, if possible greater than theirs,

for we know the full mystery of Thy death and redemption, as yet concealed from them. But how shall I presume to sit at Thy Table, unworthy sinner that I am? Behold, Thou hast condescended to wash my soul, not in water, not in tears, but in Thine own blood, warm from the loving furnace of Thine own heart! Behold, Thou hast wiped away my uncleanness, not with a napkin girt around Thee, not with Thy hair, but with Thy very Body, the garment of Thy humanity all rent and torn for this purpose. May my tongue never cease to bless and praise Thee for so much condescension; and let me ever seek occasion to imitate Thy kindness, copying the example of Thy abasement; where I can to the letter; where this is not in my power, in its spirit by charity and humility."

Fifth Meditation

JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF OLIVES

Preparation.—Contemplate your Blessed Redeemer prostrate on the ground which He waters with His tears and blood, in the Garden of Olives, while His Apostles sleep at a distance.

1. Reflect that this is the first scene of our Saviour's bitter Passion, or rather its prelude or preparation. He had passed the day in an occupation pleasant to His loving heart. "Desiderio desideravi hoc pascha manducare vobiscum." He had consoled His afflicted disciples, saying, "Non turbetur cor vestrum neque formidet." He had given them the last legacy of His love by instituting the adorable Eucharist; and thus He had been employed on some of the most consoling offices of His ministry. It was therefore meet that between this occupation and His dolorous Passion, there should be an interval of separation, during which He should in a manner be cut off from all commerce with men, and should

prepare His soul in silence and meditation for the awful and terrible tragedy which was to ensue. Further reflect how it was just that the first blow should be struck in a manner by His Eternal Father, whose justice He had undertaken to propitiate. Now this could only be done by the abandonment of soul and utter desolation of spirit into which He was allowed to fall. For God was to strike Him by withdrawing from Him the comforts and interior happiness which often recompense a soul in grace. Again, as the contemplation of His Passion naturally fixes our thoughts and sympathies upon His corporal sufferings, and, indeed, divides them between His sorrows and the detestable inhumanity and injustice of His persecutors, we are thereby apt to overlook the deeper sufferings of the spirit; therefore it was fitting that there should be one portion of His Passion wherein these griefs might be contemplated alone, before bodily pain was added to them, and wherein He should appear without other persons, much more wicked ones, to divide and diminish the in-

terest we ought to feel exclusively in His Divine Self. Lastly, before being made to endure the penalty of sin, it was proper that, as far as He could, He should reduce Himself to the condition of a sinner, by placing before and upon Himself the entire burden of human transgressions, and being bent down by them to the earth, before He felt the weight of that Cross upon His shoulders, which might, under other circumstances, have appeared unjust.

2. Reflect how completely all this takes place in the Garden of Olivet. There He lies upon the ground in solitude, the crowd far removed from Him, His chosen three Apostles overwhelmed in deep slumber, and deaf to His remonstrances and heedless of His danger. He looks on His right hand and on His left, and there is none to comfort Him. He is cut off completely from all human sympathy. His Heavenly Father seemeth to have withdrawn from Him the light of His countenance, and His candle no longer shineth on His head. When He prays He seems not to be heeded, and though He repeats His prayer again and

again, a deaf ear seems to be turned to all His supplications. Here He is alone, with neither friend nor enemy near, abandoned to Himself, yet overwhelmed with mortal anguish and agony, such as no man else ever endured, and suffering more in His soul during that brief hour than He did in body during the remainder of His Passion. There, in a word, He took upon Himself the burden of our iniquities. "Dominus posuit super eum iniquitates omnium nostrum," and their weight not only bowed Him down, but forced from His pores an unprecedented sweat of blood, the first-fruits of what He was about so plentifully to shed. So overwhelmed is He with grief, that one of His own angels receives a mission to come and strengthen Him!

3. *Affections.*—Join company with this blessed and chosen spirit who has come down from heaven on so solemn and sorrowful an errand, and say, "Oh my good and gracious Jesus, drink, drink, I humbly pray Thee, of this bitter cup, that so I may be saved. It is true I have

mingled it for Thee with bitter gall and the foul ingredients of my hateful sins; but I know that Thou lovest me to that degree that Thou wilt willingly drink it all rather than that I should be lost as I deserve. But, oh, let me add to it one more ingredient which will make it sweet to Thee, the tears of a sincere and loving repentance. Be comforted some little with the reflection that of those who have helped to prepare for Thee this bitter portion, one at least shall not be ungrateful for the boundless love which has prompted Thee to drink it. I at least will never forget Thee upon this Thy holy mount, this mount of unction and of light. I will never cease to love Thee for all Thou wert pleased to endure in the earliest stage of Thy Passion. Often will I meditate on the grievous sorrows of Thy meek and gentle spirit, Thy sinless soul, Thy loving heart, all of them accepted and embraced that I might be spared; and as often will I repeat the offering which now I make Thee of undivided affections and an eternal love."

Sixth Meditation

THE SADNESS OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN

Preparation.—Imagine Jesus prostrate in prayer in the Garden.

1. Reflect how our Divine Redeemer Himself described the inward sorrow and anguish which He felt when He said, "Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem." Men sometimes are struck down by a sudden blow of wretchedness, as by the unexpected death of some one most dear or most necessary to them. But here there was nothing of this sort. A short time before Jesus had been entertaining Himself with His Apostles, calmly and perhaps cheerfully. Nothing since that had occurred which, humanly speaking, might account for such a change. It is an anguish, then, which has sprung up as of itself in His heart; it is an inward sorrow, which has its root and cause entirely within. Now, however we may be able to conceive an unlooked-for affliction, as the loss of all we possess, or of some one we tenderly love, plunging us into

a frantic grief, we can hardly apprehend or properly understand an inward grief producing such mortal anguish as to be comparable, nay, far superior to those others, in magnitude and intensity. What a weight of inward sorrow must that of Jesus have been which could warrant such a phrase, "Tristis usque ad mortem." Moreover, remember who it is that speaks thus. Jesus was the Lord, not only of His own life, but of all life. When therefore He said that His Soul was sorrowful unto death, it would seem as though He intimated that His grief was sufficient to cause death even in Him. At any rate, His words imply that it was such as would have proved fatal to any other person, not supported as He was by the presence of the Divinity. But this dreadful anguish appears most remarkable when compared with the calm majesty of His conduct during the remainder of His Passion, His dignified silence and perfect self-possession. This must have been therefore a truly overwhelming sorrow, a suffering more severe than any which followed it. It was a sorrow of His Soul, and one which

was more able to bring Him to His end, had He not interposed His power, than the violence of His executioners.

2. Reflect how this state of sorrow is described by the sacred writer, when he says, "et factus in agonia prolixius orabat." He calls it an *agony*. Jesus intended, at the moment of His death, to reveal all His greatness, and give, in yielding to the lot of weak humanity, a strong proof of His Divinity. It would have been an unworthy spectacle to have seen Him writhing and convulsed upon the cross. He breathed His last there with power and majesty, so that the very heathen centurion, upon seeing the manner of His death, was heard to exclaim, "Truly this was the Son of God." But then, as He was to be "a man acquainted with sorrow," He would not leave one untasted which we are exposed to, lest in anything we might want His example, and say, "This is something more than Jesus suffered; here I am without His guidance." As we must one day undergo, in all probability, this last death-struggle, He anticipated it, as we may say, and underwent

it, that we might see in what manner we should endure it when our turn comes. But what an agony must His have been! In others it takes place when nature is already exhausted; when the body can make but little resistance to the hand of death; when the spirits are dull, the sensations blunted, and the mind enfeebled almost to the verge of unconsciousness. Yet even so it is a fearful conflict, and painful to behold. What, then, must it have been in Jesus? A real strength of death in life, an attempt at usurpation by a strong and armed hand, on the side of the destroyer, against the wakeful and resisting powers of vitality. In the vigour of youth, in the strength of health, in the energy of a vigorous mind, to feel an inward sorrow capable of causing death, and to have to grapple with it, enduring it so as not to let it effect its fatal purpose, wrestling with it as Jacob with the angel, through the dark hours of night alone, uncomforted, unaided! What a conflict! What a victory! But, good God! what a sorrow that must have been which could have produced such tremendous effects;

which could deserve to be so styled; which could, in truth, be considered the agony of Jesus! And what a violent and most execrable cause there must have been to raise in Him such grief! And such truly it was; for it was sin. It was here, in truth, that He took upon Himself the burden which He was to bear of our iniquities. This was the heavy wood, the fuel for His sacrifice which was laid here upon the shoulders of our Isaac, much heavier to Him, and much more calculated to crush Him to the ground than the material cross which afterwards He could not carry. Yes, now truly hath His dear but most righteous Father laid upon Him the iniquities of us all. What a frightful load! What a debt of more than ten thousand talents? Here He put on the person of the sinner, yea, of all the sinners whom He came to redeem. He felt Himself invested with their detestable offences, as Jacob was with the hairy skins, to personate his evil brother, Esau; but then it was not for the purpose of stealing a blessing, but of assuming a curse to another due. Can I wonder now at His

soul being flooded with a deluge of new, inexpressible grief, a sorrow unto death, an overpowering agony? With His hatred, abhorrence for sin, to see Himself covered and buried under the accumulated iniquities which man had committed, or should commit, during the world's entire duration!

3. *Affections.*—"Yes, my dear Jesus, and among them all mine, I am sure, must have been most prominent; for none has ever offended Thee with greater ingratitude and fouler baseness than I have. Cruel, cruel, indeed have I been towards Thee! When I think that by sacrificing the gratification of my worthless desires, I should have caused a sensible diminution in that mountain of iniquity which pressed upon Thee, and consequently in the anguish which it caused in Thy Blessed Soul, to think that it might have been in my power to make Thee suffer less than Thou actually didst suffer: and I would not! Oh, what a bitter, what a cruel thought! Whenever, then, I am tempted to sin and offend Thee, let me say to myself, 'There would be another of the stings which went through the heart of Jesus in

the Garden; there would be another of the many bitter drops which I have poured into His chalice of sorrows; there would be one more of the causes of His agony, of His death-struggle in the Garden.' And if, through Thy grace, I resist, let me be consoled by the thought that I have prevented at least one additional pang in that sorrowful night. And if I think of sin in this manner, if I consider it ever in reference to the effects it produced upon Thy most sacred Heart on that Thy last night, surely I shall be in no danger of yielding to the hateful tempter who urges me to send another arrow through it, and aggravate Thy already too bitter sorrows."

Seventh Meditation

THE FEARS OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN

Preparation.—As in the previous meditations, imagine Jesus in the Garden.

1. Reflect well upon those words of the Gospel, "Cœpit pavere et tædere, et mœstus esse." The anguish of our Blessed Saviour

was in no small measure made up of fear. Of what could He be afraid, He who was omnipotent, the Word of the Father, by whom all things were made? Yet true it is that He feared, and that vehemently, the torments and death which then hung over Him. He had, it is true, not only determined to endure them, but He had chosen them, and voluntarily taken them upon Himself for our redemption. He had kept them before His eyes, without intermission, during the thirty-three years of His life, as the very object of His existence in His humanity. But now that the time for enduring them drew nigh, He for a while, if so we may speak, allowed the feebleness of His human nature to prevail over the power of His Divine Nature, and (in a sense) balance that resolute determination with which He had till now looked forward to the day of trial. And as the ordinary weaknesses of the flesh, which lead to sin, could not assail Him, He permits its shrinking dread of pain to afflict Him with a terrible trial. Grounds, indeed, there were in abundance for such shrinking. For now the various

torments which He was separately to suffer on the following day were presented to Him all together, so that He could sum them up and speak of them as the ingredients of one chalice, presented to Him by His Heavenly Father to be drunk off at a draught. We all know from experience that the prospect of some pain to be endured is often a severer torture than the pain itself. But here was more than a vague conception and imagination of what was almost immediately to be endured; more than a clear, vivid, and perfect human anticipation of it, making the suffering in mind equal to what the reality would prove. It was with the light of God, and the perfect knowledge of His eternal wisdom, that this dismal and harrowing prospect was viewed. No wonder, then, that the terror produced by this sight should have been so extreme.

2. Reflect how it was not so much the bodily sufferings He was about to undergo that shook with such terror the Heart of the Son of Man, but far more the cause for which He was about to suffer them. It was the burden of our sins which He chiefly dreaded.

He was to assume the character of representative, in its entire fulness, of our fallen race, whose flesh and sinless infirmities He had already taken. His abhorrence of sin, as an offence against His Father, and consequently against Himself, was a detestation far beyond what it is in our power to imagine. He could not have taken on Himself our nature, if the step had involved the condition of sinfulness, even that of the smallest conceivable venial offence against the Divine Law. Yet now He is to be overpowered with the accumulated transgressions of the entire race, from the sin of Adam to the treachery of Judas, yea, to the sacrilege of His own executioners. Can we, then, wonder at His shrinking in horror and dread from the idea of thus laying upon Himself, with His own hands, so fearful a load? It is not a fear of being immolated, as the lamb to take away sin, that oppresses His Heart; but a dread of being sent forth as the emissary goat with the frightful crimes of all the world upon His Head. But this is not all. As the bearer of this load, He necessarily becomes an object of the wrath of

His own Eternal and dear beloved Father! He, the dutiful, the most loving of sons, who had but one Will with the Father, who, throughout His mortal life, had been the perfect pattern of all obedience and docility, He who actually, at that moment, was going to suffer that He might give the first example of an obedience even unto death, is under the wrath, to say no more, of that tenderest of Fathers! Oh, what abundant cause of fear! Who can wonder that He dreaded so dark a state, and recoiled before such a change! But to those great leading motives of fear to advance further in His work, we may add others great in themselves, though smaller by comparison. He finds Himself alone, to struggle against the machinations of conspired enemies, against the cruelties of enraged multitudes, single-handed, without a friend to console Him, or to sympathise with His numerous distresses. He looks on His right hand and on His left, and there is no one to comfort Him. It would appear as though Divine Providence had from this stage of His Passion until Calvary itself, excluded His Blessed Mother,

and the pious women, who would have given Him some comfort, that so His abandonment might be the more complete.

3. *Affections.* — Endeavour in spirit to supply the place of these His dear friends, by sympathising with your afflicted Saviour; and say, "My blessed and dear Saviour, what an excess of love is this in Thee, to stoop even to this lowest abyss of fear for my redemption; that nothing might seem too bitter, nothing too lowly for Thy love of me to undergo. When the terrors of death shall compass me, let me think of Thy sinless fears, and be comforted. Let me not be thrown into despair at the prospect of its sufferings, when I think how Thy Divine self, to encourage Thy poor servants, wert pleased to share their fears, and give them an example of bearing them. Let me in that hour call upon Thee, who didst tremble in the Garden of Olives, and let me find succour. And even now, let this especial suffering of Thine be a comfort to my heart, amidst the fears and anxieties of my inward life, in the terrors of temptation, in the fear of the world's censures,

and in every other species of fear that can oppress me. Let us, then, dear Lord, sympathise together. Behold, many fears shake me in my daily thoughts, especially when I reflect on my manifold offences. Let us, then, put our respective fears together, and Thine shall prove a balm and a comfort to mine. Mine are felt for sins that require cure: Thine were felt as a remedy for sin. Let Thine heal mine, and let me ever find comfort and refreshment in the merciful sufferings of that dread hour of Thy mortal life."

Eighth Meditation

THE PRAYER OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Blessed Saviour prostrate on the ground, earnestly repeating His prayer.

1. Reflect how every meditation, device, or expression of man on the anguish and fears of our dear Redeemer in the Garden of Olives, falls far short of the idea of them conveyed in the short prayer which He then repeated. "Pater, si fieri potest, transeat

a me calix iste." Alas, alas, my dear Jesus! art Thou reduced so low as this, to seem to flinch before the bitter cup of suffering which Thou hast proposed to drink for our sakes? Thou dost exhibit Thyself to Thy angels, as though all but ready to abandon the great work of our salvation, to retrace the many steps Thou hast already taken, rather than go through with the cruel tragedy of which the prologue is already so bitter! How the cause of us poor creatures seems to tremble for a moment in the scale, while on one side weighed Thy reverence to the Eternal Father, for which all Thy petitions merited to be heard, and on the other Thy love for man and for each of us in particular. How must Heaven have stood for an instant in awful suspense to see which should prevail! But no! Blessed be Thou, my loving Jesus, for that clause in Thy supplication, which decided its result in our favour. "Si fieri potest." Yes, I well understand the meaning and immense force of these words, pregnant as they are with our eternal salvation. "If," it seems to say, "this is compatible with Thy decrees

and promises that man shall be redeemed, if it be reconcilable with My fixed determination to pay the entire price of his ransom, and accomplish the work of his salvation at any cost; if this can be done without My drinking of this chalice of agony, then, and only then, remove it from before Me. 'Pater, si fieri potest, transeat a me calix iste.'" Oh, excess of love, which would not take advantage of the authority of the Divine power vested in Him; while it yielded His human nature to a struggle so severe, to a suffering so acute, as made it draw back in horror from the draught, and entreat its removal, attaching to it such a condition as presented no obstacle to our salvation. For well did Jesus know that He had recorded a previous caution against the acceptance of His prayer thus wrung from His soul by the agony of His sufferings; and that to the record in the book of His Father's decrees, He had prefixed those irrevocable words, "*Behold, I come.*" But do I wonder that He should have recoiled from the cup offered to His lips, or that He should have secured His

obligation to drink it at all? He recoiled from it; for what was in that cup? Our sins. He drank it nevertheless; for what was to be gained by drinking it? Their pardon and our salvation. Is not the whole mystery at once solved; the seeming contradiction of desires completely explained? For if I cannot look back upon my sins, even though (I trust) forgiven, without confusion and horror, can I wonder that the innocent Lamb of God should contemplate them with an infinite hatred and abhorrence? He saw that they would be committed against Himself, in spite of all He was suffering, and about to suffer, for my sake. Still more, He had to take them all upon Himself, to make Himself responsible for them. Yet, when I think how He loved me, even more than His life, I cease to be astonished to see how, notwithstanding all repugnance, He quaffed the chalice of my sins to its very dregs! Oh, dear Jesus, how shall I ever love Thee as I ought?

2. Reflect upon the goodness of your loving Saviour, who was pleased, in the

midst of His dreadful agony, to bear you ever in mind, by so ordering this brief prayer as to make it a perfect model for your imitation. As man, He prayed for the removal of a temporal, though most grievous calamity; one which no mere human strength could bear. He therefore prayed with deep earnestness, repeating again and again the same words, which contained the object of His request. He prayed with most profound devotion, prostrate upon the bare hard ground, bathed in tears, filled with anguish and sorrow. He prayed with untiring perseverance, returning thrice to the same supplication, after finding His disciples asleep and insensible to His agony. What a model for us is here; that, instead of hurrying, with our lips, through prayers formal and cold, and being discouraged if we are not at once heard, we should be truly in earnest in every prayer, whatever its object, if we really desire to receive what we ask. But then, how truly did He resign the issue to the will of God, as not being a thing of its own nature necessary, "Verumtamen, non

mea voluntas, sed tua fiat." This is the true essential condition of all such entreaties; that we seek not our own wills, but the will of God. He knoweth what is best for us, and will give it to us; though often He will accomplish His blessed will, and our good, by refusing us our present petition to give us something better. But let us never cease to admire this most affectionate token of our dear Redeemer's love, who, even while undergoing such fearful sufferings, would not allow an opportunity to pass by that might instruct us, and make us wise unto salvation.

3. *Affections.*—"If I, my dear Lord, have so much helped to mix for Thee this bitter cup of pain and suffering, let me at least share it with Thee. When the sons of Zebedee had given way to a momentary impulse of ambitious desire, Thou didst bring them back to right feeling by that gentle question, 'Are you able to drink of the cup whereof I shall drink?' Oh, who could resist such a question? Who could refuse most cheerfully to answer, 'Yes'? Who would decline to drink from

the same chalice, however bitter and nauseous the potion, which Thy blessed lips have consecrated and sweetened? Welcome, then, my dear Saviour, any portion of Thy chalice. I will drink of it willingly in all afflictions, trials, and persecutions that I may endure for Thy sake. So far from shrinking from my duty in promoting Thy glory and Thine own work of saving souls, from any apprehension, I will glory in afflictions, studying to bear them in the spirit of Olivet, in the feeling that I am paying back to Thee in kind, some small portion of that generous love and tender kindness which made Thee suffer so much for me. I will drink of that chalice with compunction, in the bitterness of my grief for sin, in detestation of my offences against Thee, my loving Saviour. Often will I weep over them in the garden of affliction, in company with Thee; and thus atone for the suffering with which I there overwhelmed Thy tender Heart. I will drink lovingly from Thy own blessed chalice upon Thine altar, that *calix meus inebrians et præclarus*, wherein I will daily commemo-

rate Thy Passion and death, receiving the awful yet most sweet draught of Thy adorable Blood, which Thou didst shed for me in Thy prayer. And in the end, grant me, dear Jesus, that I may drink it with Thee new, in the kingdom of Thy Father, when face to face I may thank Thee for all Thou hast done and endured on my behalf."

Ninth Meditation

JESUS FINDS HIS APOSTLES ASLEEP

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Saviour thrice returning to the three Apostles whom He had left at a short distance, and each time finding them fast asleep.

1. Reflect how our dear Redeemer in the Garden seemed doomed to every species of abandonment, and to be shut out from all comfort. For He had singled out from the rest of His Apostles the three who had most reason to be attached to His person, and who had shown themselves the most zealous on various occasions. And though He retired a short distance from them to pray

alone, yet He seemed to wish to have them still near Himself. Judge, then, of His bitter disappointment, when, on returning to them, He finds them sunk on the ground in deep slumber. Was this the fruit of His pathetic discourse but a few hours before? Is this the only result of the confident promises made by His disciples? Is this James, one of the two who had once desired fire to come down from heaven to consume those who would not receive his Master? Is this John, who so shortly before had leaned his head upon His bosom? Is this Peter, who had expressed himself ready to die with Him, and protested that he would never abandon so good a Lord? Are these the three who were chosen to be the sole spectators of the glorious vision on Mount Thabor; and was there not sufficient evidence and encouragement in that scene to support them through the gloomier hour which now awaits them? But Divine Providence so disposed it, that, abandoned for a time to the weakness of their own nature, they should be overcome by heaviness, and so unable to give their suffering Master the

mite of consolation which their sympathy might have afforded Him. But if the first time He came to them, it was afflicting to Him to find them sleeping, how much more grievous was it on His second return! For just before, on His first, He had lovingly reproved them for their unseasonable rest and drowsiness, saying, "What, could ye not watch one hour with Me? Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. xxvi. 40, 41). What mild and gentle words on so trying an occasion! After having remonstrated with them for their supineness, He seeks Himself to excuse it, so as to save their love for Him from all blame. He casts all the fault on their natural infirmity, not on any personal negligence. Oh, how gentle should we be in reproving others, and in excusing their seeming neglects, or their inattention to our wishes! Three times did the meek Jesus suffer the same disappointment, and each time with the same forgiving spirit. The second time He returned He said nothing to them; the first

reproach ought to have aroused them from their lethargy, but failing this, He retired in silence to prayer. And the third time, seeing their exceeding weariness, He would urge them no longer, but bade them sleep on. It is thus that He pardons our daily relapses, when He sees that we offend through frailty. In this manner He visits us again and again, in the hope of inciting us by His forgiving and patient conduct to greater watchfulness and care. But alas! we sleep and slumber on, and forget our dangers; till at last the hour of trial comes and takes us unawares.

2. Reflect upon the practical lessons we may learn from this afflicting and humbling scene. The Garden was to Christ and to His Apostles a preparation for the respective parts they were to bear in the ensuing Passion. To Jesus, it was to be one of unmitigated suffering that would need an unshaken resignation. He prayed therefore earnestly for it; He meditated on the fruits and consequences which were to ensue from His patient endurance; and He obtained it, and went forth to His task armed

and strengthened for every extreme, and ready to drink to its dregs the cup prepared for Him by His Father. The part of the Apostles was one of trial and danger; the Shepherd was to be struck, and the natural consequence was that the sheep would be dispersed; they were to see their Master subject to every ignominy, and it was likely they would be scandalised in Him. Satan had desired to have them, that he might sift them as wheat; and against all these dangers they had been shown the safeguard — watchfulness and prayer. "Vigilate et orate, ne intretis in tentationem." The Apostles neglected this preparation for the hour of trial; Peter above all, whose boasting had been the loudest, and whose professions the strongest, and whose dangers had been pronounced the greatest, neglected the admonitions of his Master; and when the hour of trial came, of course he failed, and that in a twofold manner. First, aroused on a sudden from his sleep by the tumultuous assault of Judas' band, unprepared as to what he ought to do, unacquainted through his

neglect with the spirit in which his Divine Lord willed to meet His sufferings, he unsheathes his weapon, rushes inconsiderately upon a much larger force, and strikes and grievously wounds one of the High Priest's servants. No doubt, such a deed of ineffectual violence was amply revenged by the ruffians upon the person of our dear Saviour, by an aggravation of their blows and insults; so that the imprudence of the disciple seemed to add to the injury of his Master. Secondly, after having made himself notorious and obnoxious by so active a partisanship, he proceeds to expose himself to the danger of a contest with men most interested in his disgrace. We are here in our state of preparation; told now to watch and pray that we may pass safely through the trials that await us, in co-operating, in some sort, with Jesus in the work of saving mankind. And if we now neglect these duties, if we study not to imbibe the true spirit of our vocation, what can we expect but that, by our rashness, and want of meek and charitable bearing, we shall injure the cause of our

Master, or by our ignorance and imprudence betray it?

3. *Affections.*—"O adorable Jesus! ever meek and kind, how wert Thou abandoned by all in Thine hour of trouble and darkness, without even the sympathy of a friend? And yet, while at this moment I compassionate Thy distress, how often canst Thou address me in the same reproving words as Thou didst Thy sleeping disciples, 'Could you not watch one hour with Me?' Alas! to my shame and confusion I own it, often has an hour of prayer, an hour spent in Thy blessed company, seemed to me long and irksome! How often have I shortened the already too short time allotted to this holy exercise! Again and again, too, I have found it burdensome to fix my thoughts, for half that time, upon the meditation of Thy sufferings; yea, of these very sufferings of Thine in the Garden of Olives. Oh! give me strength and grace often and often to spend a much longer space of time in this holy contemplation, and in watching beside Thee in Thy Passion. And let me, I pray Thee, ever be alive to the conse-

quences of neglecting those duties during the season of preparation; that so when the day of trial comes, I may be found ready, and not suffered to fall away."

Tenth Meditation

OUR SAVIOUR'S SWEAT OF BLOOD

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Saviour stretched on the ground in His prayer in the Garden.

1. Reflect upon the wonderful evidence here given us of the severity of our dear Redeemer's sufferings in this His agony; of which the holy Evangelist tells us, "Et factus est sudor ejus sicut guttæ sanguinis decurrentis in terram." The inward agony of Jesus's soul could not but outwardly manifest itself; the Blood which first drew back round His heart, in the chill of His first desolation and fear, burst forth with new and terrible energy into its course, and breaking through its channels, overflowed, oozing out through the pores. It gathered first as a dew upon His skin, and then

trickled down His blessed limbs, till it flowed upon the ground. What a fever of agony must have first burnt through His veins; what a throb of mortal pain must have beat at His temples; what a deadly suffocation must have oppressed His heart, before nature or the Hand of His Heavenly Father brought that relief! Relief! how truly in character with the rest of His Passion; where, when He is worn-out by His scourging, He is seated on a throne of ignominy to be crowned with thorns; when He is faint with thirst, refreshed with gall and vinegar. So here, when He is fevered with anguish, He is relieved by a sweat of Blood! Merciful God! is this the only species of compassion which Thy beloved Son Jesus is destined to experience through the sufferings that await Him? But if there was in this outbreak of inward, pent-up sorrow some measure of relief, we may also imagine what a cause of exhaustion it must have been to the delicate frame of our beloved Saviour. For if a slight fever, resolving itself into a natural and refreshing heat, does yet so exhaust us, that for many

hours we are unfit to attend to our ordinary and comparatively easy occupations, we may judge how little qualified He must have been, after so unusual and so trying a drain upon His fevered body, to begin a career of bodily inflictions, sufficient to have overcome one strong and previously unexhausted.

He was already stretched upon the ground, unable to support His own weight; judge, then, if He was in a condition to be bound with cords, beaten, and dragged into Jerusalem. It seems, indeed, as though it had pleased Him and His Eternal Father to increase at once the intensity of His sufferings, and the miracle of His patience, by reducing Him at the outset to this most pitiable condition.

2. Reflect how here, almost for the first time, appears the price of our redemption, and under circumstances peculiarly touching, containing an appeal to our hearts. Hail, then, with all affection these bright drops of His most Precious Blood, these ruby jewels, that form one large instalment of the payment of thy ransom! Greet with

all love and reverence this earnest pledge which thy Lord gives thee beforehand, that even His life, and the warm stream that circulates through His frame, shall be lavished upon thee. Draw nigh, as the young ones of the pelican do, when the mother pierces her own breast, and gives them her own heart's blood for nourishment. For here is no lash, no thorn, no nail, no spear to wound the flesh of your dear Saviour; but He Himself seems to have opened the fountains of life, and bid them flow before their time, that so we, His dear ones, might partake of them, before His wicked enemies come to disturb, and in a manner to profane them, by their barbarous and sacrilegious treatment. This is the juice of that precious Vine, flowing spontaneously forth, before the wine-press hath crushed, and bruised, and disfigured it. This is the virgin-balm that exudes from this sacred plant, before men have cut its stem, and violently and irreverently caused it to flow. It is unmixed with that mysterious water which denoteth death; every drop is brilliant, pure, and untempered, filling for

us a chalice of salvation, in return for the cup of bitterness which He has just received at our hands! But hold! Is there then no executioner near, that causes such clear marks of severe suffering? Must there not be some adequate agency, inward at least, to produce so awful a result? Alas, alas! too truly there is; and this Blood is in truth every drop of it *ours;* as being shed immediately and entirely by our sins. As surely as Moses struck the rock, and caused the refreshing waters to flow, so certainly has the cruel blow of our manifold sins opened the Heart of Jesus, and unlocked the waters of salvation there. While then we love with peculiar tenderness this great step in the bloody sacrifice, let a deep and feeling sorrow mingle with our affection; and let us repay this spontaneous flow of Blood, by a no less spontaneous and ample flow of tears. Oh, that they could be tears of blood! Surely none but martyrs have ever repaid in any sense as they ought this charity of their Saviour, by washing their garments in blood, and so being worthy to follow in His train. But

let us at least honour and love Him in our hearts the more, so far as our weakness will allow us. The robe in which He now appears, this delicate veil of His own sacred Blood which covers His body, is fairer and brighter to our mind than the dazzling whiteness of His raiment on Thabor. Truly may we say of Him, "Quis est hic, qui venit de Edom, tinctis vestibus de Bosra? iste formosus in stola sua" (Isa. lxiii.). Yes, this is the robe which best becomes Him in our eyes who have sinned against Him, and have been redeemed by His adorable Blood. Let us then never be wearied with meditating upon this stage of our dear Saviour's Passion, on which some of the most contemplative saints have dwelt the most frequently, and with the greatest fruit. For Jesus, wounded and brutally mangled, is a spectacle beyond the ordinary lot of humanity, and not likely to be ever, in the strictest sense, a model for our imitation. But Jesus afflicted under the strong hand of God is an example for each of us, in those dark hours which Divine Providence may justly or mercifully send

us. Oh, let the Bloody Sweat of the Son of God be then our comfort and support!

3. *Affections.*—"Blessed and most amiable Jesus, the more Thou art cast down and afflicted upon earth, the higher Thou art exalted in my heart and affections. The nearer Thou seemest to approach the most afflicted condition of humanity, the more I recognise and venerate in Thee the splendour of Thy Divinity. A mere man sent on an errand from God, the noblest of the prophets, could not have afforded to sink so low in the scale of humanity, without risking the reverence of his office But Thou becomest greater in proportion as Thou dost make Thyself less, and the more sublime as Thou appearest to sink the more. But one thing Thou must certainly become, unless I be a monster of unfeeling ingratitude; dearer and dearer to me, in the same measure as Thou art more afflicted and abased. In the centre then of my heart I embrace Thee, and at the same time adore Thee. By that precious Blood which consecrated Olivet, purer and richer than the dew of Hermon,

I entreat Thee to wash my corrupt heart clean from every stain of sin. Let but one of those precious drops fall upon it, and it shall be thoroughly cleansed, and perfectly sanctified, and, like that hill of unction, a place of prayer and of resignation, of expiation and of comfort, of sorrow and of love. Tears of contrition shall repay Thy sweat of Blood, and the joy of a repenting sinner shall compensate Thine agony of grief."

Eleventh Meditation

JESUS IS COMFORTED BY AN ANGEL

1. Reflect how the Gospel informs us that while Jesus was in His agony in the Garden, "there appeared to Him an Angel from heaven, strengthening Him." What an idea does not this circumstance give us of our Saviour's (Luke xxii. 43) distress! It would appear as though pity were at length wrung from Heaven, as though the agony were too severe to be any longer witnessed, without some relief being sent to Him. His disciples are asleep, and

need rather His support, every other friend is at a distance; earth consequently can do nothing for Him, and Heaven must therefore minister all the comfort He can be allowed. Will not the heavens then open with a bright and glorious splendour, and the Holy Spirit descend upon His head, as He did on the bank of Jordan? Or will a bright cloud overshadow Him, and the same voice of adoption and complacency be heard as was repeated on Thabor? Or will merely a voice be heard, like thunder, saying that the Father hath glorified Him and will glorify Him again? But if this comfort has on this occasion to be committed to inferior ministry, a multitude surely of the heavenly host, such as sung "Glory to God" at His birth, will be sent in a brightness that shall dispel, as it then did, the darkness of night. How eagerly will the legions of angels press forward to be sent on such an errand of comfort to Him whom they so love! Alas! the time for glory is not; it is both past and to come. It is now the season of humiliation; and it is so ordered

that even the comfort administered, because become as it were necessary, should be accompanied with this feeling. One solitary angel glides down unperceived from heaven, and appears at His side! One of His own creatures, one of His own servants offering Him relief! One of His own host encouraging and supporting Him! Nay, more; even strengthening Him! As though He were become powerless and could no longer support Himself, but needed the strength which an angel could lend Him. Oh! what an afflicting spectacle to that blessed spirit, who probably as yet knew not the full extent of the mystery of Redemption! How distressing to him, if he understood not wherefore was all this suffering endured, to see his Lord and Master reduced to such a sad condition, lying on the ground bedewed with His own blood that trickled down during His agony! Or, if the counsel of God had been revealed to him, and he was aware that it was for the ransom of guilty man, and if we may imagine feelings akin to ours to have

passed through his mind, must not a sort of indignation have been aroused in him, at thinking how little our race was worthy of such a Victim, and of such immolation! What a specimen he might be supposed to think he had before his eyes of the value which men would set upon this painful work of Redemption, in the sound slumber of the three chosen Apostles, who had been wakened and begged to watch and pray, because the soul of Jesus was sorrowful even unto death, yet still slept on! If hardy soldiers on the field of battle will weep like women, when they see their general lying mortally wounded, and are called to take him apart, how must that loving minister have sorrowed, when he witnessed his Lord in such a condition, and had to undertake the task of comforting Him! But still O most happy of all the celestial choirs to have been selected for such a task, and to have been the sole witness of the sorrows and agony of that night! How wilt thou remember for eternity that solemn and awful spectacle, so full of love for us?

Surely some badge of brighter glory must distinguish thee, that we, when we are admitted to the company of the blessed spirits, may be able to single thee out, and thank thee lovingly for the part thou dischargedst that night towards our dear Jesus.

2. Reflect how would this happy angel proceed to discharge his task of consoling and strengthening our Blessed Saviour. Would he endeavour to show Him that the pains He was about to endure were not so grievous as He had imagined, that the stripes and buffets, the insults and scoffs were more severe and painful in anticipation than in reality, that the thorns and the nails would only produce one temporary pang, and all would be over? Would he in other words try to disguise what He had to undergo, or to abate its extremity, as physicians are wont to do to one on whom is about to be inflicted a painful and dangerous operation? Or would he comfort Him as the minister of God does one who is condemned to death, and has to undergo

the extreme sentence of the law, by inculcating resignation to a fate that has been merited? Or would he address himself to the assuaging of the deeper sorrow endured for sin, and represent to Him that the load of guilt which He had taken, and which pressed so heavily upon Him, was exaggerated in fancy, and that there was no reason for such excessive grief? Alas! all these ordinary modes of consolation were shut out, founded as they are either upon deceit or real commission of guilt, neither of which could have place, the one in the messenger of heaven, or the other in Him to whom he was sent. There could be no comfort admitted which in aught should pretend to mitigate the rigour of the coming Passion, or to temper the unqualified bitterness of the cup now before him. Could we then imagine that blessed spirit addressing Him thus: "Refuse not, Blessed Lord, the chalice which Thy Father offers Thee, and which Thou hast long since accepted. It is indeed nauseous and disgusting to Thee, but love presents it, and love will requite

it. It is true that to-night and to-morrow Thou shalt suffer much, Thy body shall be racked and rent, Thy honour shall be blighted, Thy affections wounded, Thy head more crowned with ignominy than with thorns, Thy hands more transfixed by public disgrace than by the nails, Thy heart more deeply pierced by sorrow and anguish than by the lance. But still remember what gratitude and love await Thee in return: think how the millions, whom Thou shalt to-morrow purchase, will strive with one another who shall best display his ardent affection, and shall most adequately requite by deeds this Thy excessive kindness. It is for a feeling race that Thou art about to die; it is against unfailing and boundless love from all mankind that Thou art about to exchange a few hours of suffering and one moment of death. No more shalt Thou be outraged by those on whose behalf Thou art so profuse of blood and life. Earth from henceforth, watered by the streams that are now flowing on it, shall bud salvation, and put forth fruits of holiness!" Ah!

would not such consolation, if attempted, have been so much gall, so much poison added to the cup which Jesus already loathed? Would not such promises, however natural and rational, have stung Him to the heart, conscious as He was how exactly the reverse the consequence of His Passion would be? Nothing then remained for this angel to do, but in the words of the sacred text to *strengthen* Jesus—that is to say, to encourage Him to the complete and unqualified draining of His cup. He can only place before Him the will of His Heavenly Father, and His own voluntary acceptance; and urge Him on to the fulfilment of His work, in spite of its pains and toils, in spite, moreover, of the base ingratitude that would requite it; and of the infamous return of sin and vice that would be made Him!

3. *Affections.*—"O Divine Saviour of our souls, far from Thy servants be this unfeeling conduct! Far from us be the meanness of heart which it supposes, but let our hearts glow with gratitude for so

much unmerited love, such self-devotion as Thou showedst to our welfare! Even beyond an angel's power to comfort is Thy sorrow; Thy grief is without cure, and Thou hast none to bear it with Thee. Every arm that would rise in Thy behalf is tied down; and the blessed spirit that stands before Thee must be content to be a sorrowful spectator of Thy enemies' approach—must see Judas sacrilegiously kiss Thee without striking him to the ground, and behold Thee bound and borne away without power to help Thee. Oh! let it not be so with us at our last moments. Let Thy guardian angel stand beside our bed of sickness, not merely to comfort, but to defend us. Let him, during our silent agony, whisper to us topics of Divine consolation, reminding us of the boundless mercies of our God, and of the merits of this Thy agony, strengthening us to bear the sorrows of death, and encouraging us to look forward to the price of our redemption; but, at the same time, breaking through the toils of perdition, chasing away the

terrors of hell, and bringing to nought the machinations of the enemy of our salvation. Let us in that hour find comfort and peace in the remembrance of Thy agony and sweat of blood in the Garden of Olives, and let us in that hour receive the fruit of our frequent and loving meditation upon this stage of Thy Passion.

Twelfth Meditation

OUR SAVIOUR'S RESIGNATION

Preparation. — Represent to yourself Jesus, as in former meditations, stretched upon the ground in prayer.

1. Reflect how, during His blessed agony, our Divine Redeemer never ceased to possess His soul in patience, and never under His most dreadful anguish of mind forgot the duty of thorough resignation to the will of His Eternal Father. It is true that during this anxious trial His soul revolted from the chalice prepared for Him, and the feelings of humanity shrunk from facing the course of suffering that awaited Him,

but still the complete conformity of His human with His Divine will, never allowed the smallest opposition between the two, or the rebellion of the one against the other. Hence, if He prayed that the cup presented to Him might pass away, He was careful to add "non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat." If Jesus had not inserted in His prayer this saving clause, what would have become of us? His prayer could not but be heard, "exauditus est pro sua reverentia;" had He unconditionally prayed that the hateful draught should be removed from His presence, His petition must have been granted. But blessed be His name, He resigned Himself for our sakes, and so became the willing Victim for our sins. But to estimate the fulness of this voluntary sacrifice, we must consider that it was made with full knowledge of its extent. When we make an act of resignation, we seldom do it with a clear perception of what we are about to suffer. If illness surprise us, we perhaps throw ourselves into the arms of Divine Providence, and resign ourselves to God's will; but we have

no idea whether we shall suffer much or little, for a long or for a short period, and hope, that never abandons our bedside, flatters us into the belief that our sufferings shall be light and brief. Nay, we are not a little encouraged to the practice of such resignation, by the idea that it will alleviate our pain. But the resignation of Jesus in the Garden of Olives was a yielding up of Himself to a series of cruel inflictions, all clearly and distinctly visible to His mind, yea, as completely so as if they were at that moment actually made. There was here no room, even supposing there had been the will, to practise any self-deceit; the duration, the nature, and the intensity of the pains and griefs about to be endured, were known in all their exactness of detail. Nor was this all. For when we resign ourselves, we know beforehand that we can only suffer at each moment its proper share of pain; whereas Jesus, in the very instant wherein He resigned Himself, endured them all cumulatively in mind and heart. For the sense of them was so lively that He might be

said actually to feel rather than to contemplate them. And to them thus presented to Him, He yielded Himself up. Oh! truly wonderful excess of virtue such as became Thee, most Blessed Lamb of God, such as we can never have an opportunity of copying, for never can we have such a perception of suffering, nor take in at once into the grasp of a single act of this virtue such a weight of tribulation and sorrow, so accurately foreseen and so sensibly foretasted! Only to Thy suffering was Thy resignation commensurate; only to Thy light and knowledge was Thy acceptance of sorrow proportioned.

2. Reflect how this resignation of our Blessed Redeemer was not as with us a mere passive virtue, but a great courageous act. For, contrast His language and conduct before and after He had made His final resolution. "Pater, si fieri potest, transeat a me calix iste;" such was His first prayer, and so He repeatedly expressed Himself during the dark hour of His desolation. But now mark the contrast. When the traitor had drawn nigh with his sacri-

legious troop, and had pointed Him out, and they attempted to seize His sacred person, Peter drew his sword and wounded the High Priest's servant. How did Jesus now speak? He forbade the attempt to rescue Him, and thus addressed his over-zealous Apostle: "Calicem quem dedit mihi pater, nonne bibam illum?" What a transition is here from loathing and terror to willingness and cheerfulness! That very cup which a few moments before He had entreated His Heavenly Father to remove, He is now most anxious to drink; and He rebukes His disciple for interposing to prevent Him. Instead of an angel being required to strengthen Him, He takes the chalice with both His hands, and quaffs it joyfully, because it is the cup of our salvation! His Father's will hath been made known to Him, "non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu vis;" and that is enough. It is that He should drink it, and it is now too sweet for Him to allow any one to remove it from His lips. Again compare the difference of His language in addressing His Apostles. At first it was timid, the speech

of one who needed counsel and encouragement. He was anxious that they should pray with Him, and He returned to them again and again to know if they were ready to assist Him. But when His prayer of resignation has been once pronounced, how confident and courageous is His speech and tone. "Surgite eamus." Rouse yourselves and let us go together, not into a place of safety, not to some obscure recess of the Garden, not to summon the rest of the eleven, or to collect our friends, but to meet the traitor and his rabble, and to do their bidding. "Surgite eamus." Arise and let us go to welcome ignominy and insult, tyranny and cruelty. As the host arises from the midst of his house, when some long-expected guest is ushered in, to whom he wishes to make particular demonstrations of honour, so let us arise and go forward some steps to greet the long-desired harbingers of man's redemption, and show the value we set upon the work by our cheerfulness in meeting its promoters. "Surgite eamus." As the bridegroom rises up so soon as the bridal procession ap-

proaches his threshold, that he may greet his spouse and lead her into the house, so let us rise up and meet at the Garden gate the bridal procession which is come to wed Me completely to humanity through its sufferings. Not more gladly doth the bidden guest enter the banqueting-room, not more joyfully doth the bride step over the door-stone than Jesus now bounds forward to His sufferings. From this instant all is courage and immovable desire to suffer, and so redeem lost man.

3. *Affections.*—"Most Blessed Lord, how shall I ever thank Thee as I ought for this Thy generous resolution, and this heroic resignation to the will of God Thy Father? And after such an example, shall I refuse to practise this excellent virtue? Having comparatively so little to endure, having so richly deserved that little and much more, being sure to find in it so much comfort and relief, what excuse can I make if I study not, however faintly, to copy the beautiful model Thou hast here given me in it? In all tribulation, therefore, under the pressure of all trials, let me turn to

Thee upon Mount Olivet, and comparing the little I feel with the grievous desolation of Thy innocent Heart, find it easy to resign myself to the dispensations of a just God, when my resignation shall be united to Thine. Let us go hand in hand in suffering, Thou innocent, I guilty; Thou suffering for me, and I willing to suffer for Thee; both resigned, Thou in noble and courageous virtue, I by humble but cheerful imitation. Thus shall I consecrate my pains by unity and conformity with Thine; and thus shall I be found worthy to drink of the chalice whereof Thou drinkest."

Thirteenth Meditation

THE KISS OF JUDAS

Preparation.—Represent to yourself our Blessed Lord advancing to meet Judas and his armed rabble, and saluted by him.

1. Reflect how in the entire history of our Divine Saviour's Passion there is nothing so revolting, or likely to cause more indignation, than the conduct of Judas.

The very act of selling his Master and Friend for thirty pieces of silver is unrivalled in baseness through the pages of history. But now that he comes to give Him up to the satellites of the High Priests, his detestable manners, ingratitude, and unfeelingness go beyond all estimate. What would have been easier than for him to have pointed out our Saviour with his hand, and so let the others seize Him? But, in fact, it would seem as though his own heart recoiled from facing the infamy of having been such a traitor. He who had so much experience of his Master's power to read the thoughts of men; he who had resisted the many clear hints from Jesus that He was aware of his purpose, yet seems to imagine that he can deceive Him into a belief that his coming to Him had no connection with that of the armed band that closely followed him, but that he had simply returned to Him after a casual absence. It seems probable that it was the custom of the Apostles respectfully but affectionately to salute their Master when they approached Him, and Judas took

advantage of this usage for the double purpose, first of saving his own character by deceiving his infallible Master, and then of complying with the conditions of his impious bargain, and delivering Him up to His enemies. He probably meant them not to be so near him, but they could not trust a traitor, and followed close at his heels. Oh! if ever there be a circumstance recorded which may rightly excite our wrath, it is surely this. If there be a man in history upon whose head the virtuous heart may fling a curse, when it might be allowed to hate and sin not, surely it is this false, this base, this execrable villain. Why did not the earth open, as it did for Core and Dathan, and swallow him alive into hell? Why did not fire come down from heaven, as it did upon the captain and his fifty men who came to seize Eliseus on the mountain, and consume this monster and his impious herd? Why was not the sword of Peter better directed, and instead of striking the ear of Malcheos, did it not pierce the heart of Judas? No, this was their hour, and the power of darkness, and

Jesus was given up into the hands of sinners. And had the just indignation of Heaven burst upon those wretches, He would have interposed to ward it off; and if such a wound had been inflicted by the over-zealous Peter, the right hand of Jesus would have been stretched out to heal it. But ah! what a kiss was that to the cheek of Jesus! An aspic's renowned bite would not have felt near so stinging and hot. It is as a seal of fire branded upon His flesh, an infectious plague-spot pressed upon him. Not half so galling to His sacred shoulders were afterwards the scourges that tore them, as was this impression of the lips of Judas. Yes, of those sacrilegious lips that had but a short time before partaken of the Body of his Lord, and had drunk His sacred Blood! And, as if the foul act of treachery were not even so complete, he adds words to the act of insult, saying, "Hail, Rabbi." How revolting to the heart of Jesus must the title have sounded from such a wretch on such an occasion. Many men have been betrayed by those whom they thought their friends, but few with such aggravating, un-

necessary circumstances of treachery. Some regard will be paid to feelings of former respect and friendship, here all seems studied to wound the tender heart of Jesus, in the very smallest manner. Truly He must be the despised of men and the outcast of the people, when He is thus abandoned to the embrace of such a wretch as Judas.

2. Reflect now how our Blessed Redeemer received the proposed salutation. Does He shrink back instinctively as a man would who had come in contact with some foul, hateful thing? or as one would from the touch of a person infected with a loathsome leprosy? Oh no, he receives and returns the kiss! O Judas, if thy heart hath resisted up to the present moment, surely it must now give way! Surely the exquisite sweetness of those lips, fragrant as Heaven's choicest Saviour can make them, must cool the burning fever of thy avaricious soul, and diffuse some of its own sense through thy frame, and into thy very heart! Surely those scatterers of Divine Wisdom cannot have come into such close contact with thee,

without dispelling the darkness of inveterate ignorance that overclouded thy soul! Couldst thou resist this incomparable meekness, this sublimity of charity towards enemies, or what is more difficult, towards false friends? But Jesus could not forget that most important duty of this virtue, fraternal correction; He could not permit one of His own disciples and apostles to be lost without the last effort made of snatching him from destruction. He mildly addresses him in those most pathetic words, "Friend, whereunto art thou come? Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" Could it have been possible to expose to him in fewer words or more impressively the exact nature and enormity of his crime than is here done? "Friend!" —what a tender word! what a mild introduction to a reproof!—"dost thou betray the Son of Man, Him who has conversed with thee so familiarly, so humanly, as though He were but one of yourselves, and dost thou betray Him by an act of friendship, a token of love?" O Blessed Jesus, how like Thyself, but like no one else, is

this Thy conduct and speech! But how often may our Divine Redeemer reproachfully address us in similar language. When we draw nigh unto Him in time of prayer, as though about to address Him in quality of our friend, and all around us suppose from our attitude or words that we are inly and deeply worshipping Him, while in reality we are distracted with vain or even evil thoughts, may He not very justly address us in those same severe words: "Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" When we approach His altar, whereon He is really present, with a lukewarm heart, and introduce His adorable Body into a breast occupied by evil propensities or vain desires, when thus we may be said to deliver Him over to enemies whom He really hates, by an act that bears the semblance of closest intimacy and is a pledge of love, may He not justly turn round as He enters that profaned sanctuary, "Friend, whereunto art thou come hither? Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" And so may He address us too often, when we speak of and to Him as though we loved

Him, and outwardly before men seem to give Him honour, while in reality we are displeasing Him by habitual transgressions of His law. In fact, though, thank God's infinite mercies, we have not been guilty of such a crime as that of Judas, for whom it would have been better not to have been born; yet as we have copied the guilt of the others engaged in that cruel tragedy, as we have, by our sins, too often crucified over again our Blessed Redeemer, as we have too often, like Peter, denied Him, so have we been, perhaps, unfortunate enough in some sort to betray Him. Let us bewail as we ought this detestable offence.

3. *Affections.*—"Meek Victim of our salvation, Jesus, Redeemer of our souls, didst Thou not feel, in that moment when Judas kissed Thee, as though all our fallen nature was through him saluting Thee? What hath man been from the beginning to Thee but a prevaricator and a traitor, thinking to satisfy Thee with fine words and fervid protestations, while in his heart Thou hast found but little part? If then, dear Lord, I have till now often kissed Thee treacher-

ously with Judas, let me from henceforth kiss Thee lovingly with Magdalen. Thy feet shall receive my homage in compensation for the insult offered to Thy sacred countenance. As Thou wast willing to take the kisses which that glorious penitent impressed on them in compensation for the embrace of welcome which the Pharisee had omitted, so accept the ardent impressions of our lips upon Thy blessed feet, amidst the tears and sobs of true repentance, in expiation of that cursed act of treachery which, in the person of Judas, disgraces all our nature. And do Thou, dear Jesus, return them to us again, not in reproachful meekness, but in satisfied affection, in kind encouragement, and in most blessed reward."

Fourteenth Meditation

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS AND CAIPHAS

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Saviour, with His hands bound, and placed as a criminal successively before these two haughty and wicked men, surrounded by

PASSIONIST FATHERS
5700 North Harlem Ave.
CHICAGO 31, ILL.

their brutal satellites, ready to obey them in every cruelty.

1. Reflect upon this intermediate stage of our Blessed Redeemer's Passion, and first of all consider what befell Him in its first scene during the night of His capture. He is dragged as a criminal before the two priests, the most implacable of His enemies. There He is interrogated by them; false witnesses are suborned to swear away His life. Upon failure of their testimony, the High Priest draws Him into a declaration of His Divinity, and then pronounces Him guilty of blasphemy. After this, He is abandoned the whole night long to the fury of a merciless rabble, who subject His sacred person to every indignity and outrage within the power of their unchecked barbarity. In this and the after scenes before Pilate and Herod, we have the completion of what had been begun in Olivet, His desolation and abandonment carried to their highest pitch. For there His disciples did fight for Him, and, before that, were at least near Him, and, as it were, within call. But now they are fled. He is completely

alone, and the only one that does for a time approach, only comes to disown and forswear Him. At the same time, however, that the sufferings of the first stage of His Passion here receive their fulness and perfection, He begins to prepare for the third —that of actual bodily suffering, by the treatment He receives at the hands of the Jewish mob. Thus were His sufferings ever growing and displaying new character till their consummation. In all this, how admirably is the course and method of God's ordinary providence pointed out, who, if He wish to try us by tribulation, seldom overthrows us by one sudden calamity, but gradually inures us to suffering by a course of graduated visitations. But in drawing such comfortable lessons from my Divine Redeemer's situation, let me never forget that those pains, small and great, were undergone for my sake, and that He stood before this unjust tribunal that He might liberate me before His own dread judgment-seat, when I shall there justly appear. I have been "guilty of more than the council," and might have perhaps been

righteously condemned had I stood before it. But He, the spotless Lamb of God, who had done no sin, never could have been even brought before it, if He had not of His boundless goodness chosen to stand in my place.

2. Reflect who were these that presumed to try and pretended to condemn Him. The priests, yea, His own priests! They who should have hailed Him with trumpets of jubilee, and borne Him in triumph with canticles of joy. They who had no dignity, no power, no worth before God or men, save as His shadows and representatives. They who ministered daily to Him in the temple by sacrifice and oblation, yet knew it not. They who alone once a year had the privilege of entering within the Holy of Holies, as a type of Him who was to enter the sanctuary of heaven, bearing not the blood of oxen or of goats, but His own most precious blood, wherewith He ransomed the world, and broke down the partition-wall between earth and heaven! Great God! and it is these men who presume to sit in judgment over Thee. The

figure over the reality, the slave over his Lord, the vessel of clay over Him who fashioned it into a vessel of honour. And couldst Thou submit to this? Didst Thou actually bear this? Didst Thou stand before such a tribunal? Oh, my heart, answer thou these questions, for thou knowest that He did, solely for my sake, to teach me what my sins must have been which degraded Him so low, and what His love must have been to induce Him to endure such degradation.

3. *Affections.*—Stand thou between thy Saviour and the tribunal of these iniquitous judges, and exclaim, "Oh, ye senseless and most wicked men, on what madness are ye bent? Can ye call yourselves the ministers, the priests of God, versed in the oracles of His law and His prophets, and not be convinced that He who, through them, hath given you your name and power, now stands bound before you? Down, miscreants, from your guilty thrones, and prostrate yourselves at His feet, and crave forgiveness, if haply He will hear you; for He is a gracious Master, and now intent to save. And Thou,

meek and innocent Lamb of God, can I not loose the bands which gall Thy tender arms, and kissing those feet which have brought Thee thus far on such an errand of love, lead Thee back to Thy disconsolate mother and Thy desolate disciples?—But, hold, I too am Thy priest, and yet, alas! has my conduct been a whit the better towards Thee than that of Annas and Caiphas? Have I not again and again presumed to summon Thee to judgment before me, when I have transgressed Thy law? Have I not repeatedly treated Thee contumeliously by rejecting Thy graces and entertaining in their place my wicked inclinations? But, oh, worse than all, have I not by my negligence and irreverent handling of Thy adorable Body in the Blessed Eucharist, laid violent hands upon Thee, and personally outraged Thee truly present? Forgive, dear Lord, forgive me. In consideration of what Thou sufferedst in this portion of Thy Passion, pardon my past ingratitude; and I, on my part, promise Thee faithfully never again to repeat them. And blessed for ever be Thy holy Name."

Fifteenth Meditation

THE TESTIMONY AGAINST JESUS

1. Reflect how these sons of Belial, the priests and elders, determined as they were to destroy our Saviour at any rate, had yet the craftiness to aim at saving their character by pretending to do it with some show of reason. They accordingly set about procuring witnesses to appear and depose against Him. They have had plenty of time to make their preparations. Long have they plotted His ruin; long have they resolved to arrest Him and put Him on His trial. It is some days, too, since the immediate execution of this project has been resolved on. Our Blessed Redeemer had not lived in secret, but had been for three years constantly before the public; and it was on His conduct during that period that they intended to base their accusation. Often had the Pharisees, Herodians, and doctors themselves, put perplexing questions to Him, in hopes of detecting Him in some dangerous opinions.

They, it seems, had collected nothing to bring forward. Thousands had listened to His teaching or had witnessed His cures and other miracles; and of these many, as appeared by the proceedings of the next morning, must have been in the interests of the authorities. Yet of these but a small proportion came forward, with what success we shall immediately see. The poor women who had followed Him from Galilee were in the neighbourhood, and could easily have been brought forward. If He were indeed the guilty culprit they desired to prove Him, these women must know it, having been His followers. Why not examine them? The Apostles were, some of them, in the very house. Peter had given sufficient proof of his pusillanimity that very evening; he surely would show even more weakness when interrogated by the chief priests than he had betrayed on the question of a simple maid. Yet these men never thought of employing such means of discovering the truth. Truth was not their object: they aimed at the destruction of our Saviour.

Well, then, they bring forth their own prepared testimonies. No doubt, their part had been well rehearsed, they had been taught what to say. When, however, they stepped forward, "their testimony did not agree." The labour of preparation had been thrown away. Falsehood ever betrays itself by its contradictions; and on this occasion they were so palpable that the very suborners, for very shame, abandoned their witnesses, and refused to admit them as evidence. Honest judges would thereupon have rejected the accusation, and have acquitted the accused. And what could more clearly establish the gross injustice of this tribunal than the contrary course it followed? How can we sufficiently abhor and detest the cruel injustice here exercised towards the Son of God?

2. Reflect how at length two false witnesses were found to say that they had heard Jesus declare, how He could in three days build up a temple, not made with hands, in place of the splendid and costly edifice then existing, should this be destroyed. Had any one else said this much, it might

have been treated as an idle boast, beneath the notice of a grave tribunal of such high dignity. For there was no threat or disrespect towards the temple expressed, but only a readiness and power to rebuild it, if others should destroy it. But when spoken by Jesus, who had given such irrefragable proofs of mighty power, they were words to be received with awe and fear. They never could be made matter of accusation against Him. Not to say that the words, if they had been disposed to understand them rightly, were not to be taken in their literal import, but in a figurative signification. Here, then, was the sum of the charges which a long and minute investigation had produced! Here was the body of evidence, to condemn the Son of Man to death, which the many sittings of the Supreme Council had been able to collect! Good God! What a life must He have led upon earth, to escape the snares laid for Him, so as to furnish no more matter than this to support an accusation in the hands of the most ingrained and inveterate adversaries.

Who else but He, of all the children of Adam, could have passed so unscathed through such a scrutiny? In truth, His very persecutors, as appears from their subsequent conduct, saw how futile and how absurd the charge was, and abandoned this, their only specious accusation, in their later proceedings against Him. So aware was He of their folly, that He was in vain urged by the High Priest to make any reply. "Dost Thou answer nothing to these things which are alleged against Thee?" Jesus was content to say that He had taught nothing in private, and appealed to the testimony of those who had heard Him. And so confounded and enraged were they at their disgraceful failure in establishing anything like an imputation against him, that one of the bystanders struck Him on the face, saying, "Sic respondes pontifici?"

3. *Affections.* — Admire, as thou contemplate this vile rabble, the wonderful conduct of this your Saviour, who, by His silence, more completely baffles these wily plotters, and confounds their falsehoods,

than could have been done by the most elaborate and eloquent defence. Then say to Him, "O sinless Lamb of God! pure and holy beyond the angels, how meekly Thou standest amidst the raging wolves that thirst for Thy blood! In vain have they sought to find cause against Thee. How could they have possibly discovered the smallest blot in Thy perfect, Divine life? Oh, I love to see Thee thus, without abandoning one particle of Thy dearest virtues, meek and dumb as the lamb before its shearer, yet confounding the counsels of the rulers who have conspired against the Lord, and against Thee, His Christ. Thou dost triumph and put them to shame, without an effort, without a word, by the sole efficacy of Thy irreproachable life, which defies their censures. But while they blasphemously accuse Thee, let me bless and exalt Thee. Let me with Thy angels praise Thee, for the humiliation to which Thou didst stoop in this stage of Thy blessed Passion.

"Blessed, my dear Saviour, be Thy holy Name, and ever in our grateful hearts be the recollection of Thy ignominy suffered

for us. And teach me to profit by the blessed example Thou hast here given me. If ever accused falsely and undeservedly, let me think of Thee before the council. Let me remember how Thou, the innocent and guiltless, sufferedst in silence and meekness, and thence conclude how I, the guilty sinner, the wretch who have so often offended Thee, ought to suffer."

Sixteenth Meditation

JESUS IS ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY

Preparation. — Represent to yourself your Saviour standing in meek silence before the wicked High Priest and the assembly of His enemies.

1. Reflect how the High Priest, finding it impossible to ground any reasonable charge against Jesus upon the false testimony which he and his council had been able to suborn, took advantage of the candour and simple truthfulness which he well knew to be our Saviour's character, to convict Him, if possible, out of His own mouth. He therefore

stands up and adjures Him by the living God, to say if He be the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus hesitates not a moment to declare Himself such as He was; and the High Priest replies, saying, "Hic blasphemat, quid opus est adhuc testibus?" Now, look at the monstrous nature of this proceeding. Jesus had all along proclaimed Himself the Christ, the Son of God: and had they thought this sufficient to convict Him, it would have cost them but little trouble or ingenuity to collect evidence of it, instead of charging their souls with perjury by procuring false and lying witnesses. But the evidence of His miracles was so strong that they had not ventured to attack Him directly on this head: they rather hoped to throw discredit on His claims by adducing such charges against Him as would appear incompatible with the character of the Messias. For this purpose they had framed the charge of His having threatened the destruction of the temple, which the Messias was expected to restore to its former glory. Now, foiled in all these attempts, they are reduced to convict Him on the

direct charge of asserting Himself to be the Messias; an assertion which they charge with blasphemy. Impious and most foul charge! Against whom was it possible for Jesus, divine and consubstantial to the Father, to blaspheme? But, on the other hand, observe the horrible blasphemy which the impious priest himself commits in making such a charge against our Lord. Perhaps in all the Passion there is not a more outrageous insult upon Him than this charge of the wicked pontiff. Imagine, for a moment, one of the ancient prophets; David, who had placed all his hopes and centred all his happiness in the coming of this his son, Isaias; who had so lovingly described Him, and written his ardent aspirations after Him; or Daniel, who had so much prayed and longed for Him; and who had been so able to discover the false testimony of the two elders: imagine these saints of the ancient law standing beside the council of their nation, and seeing its chief priest solemnly pronounce their desired One, their loved One, their hope and joy—a blasphemer! Would they not have seized

the sword of Phinees, and transfixed him on the spot?

2. Reflect what lessons we may learn from this event in our dear Redeemer's Passion. It is more than likely that, if I defend the truth of our holy religion without disguise or reserve, if I push home any arguments to its adversaries, they will call me a blasphemer. If I say that Jesus, who could in three days build up the Temple not made with hands, has given us His Body and Blood in the Blessed Eucharist, in which bread is changed into His Body, I shall be told that I blaspheme. If I boldly assert that Mary is to be reverenced, invoked, and worshipped, I shall be told that I am a blasphemer. If I say that I or any minister of God has power to forgive sins, I shall hear it said, "Hic blasphemat." What then? Shall I wonder at this? Is the disciple greater than the Master? If the world have said this of Him, shall they not say it of us? If Jesus was called a blasphemer for openly declaring the truth, shall I not rejoice if, for the same reason, I, like Him, am so styled? Shall it not

encourage me to proclaim still louder the doctrine He has committed to my charge? But, further, what do we owe Jesus for this portion of His sufferings? What, but a tribute of our most fervent praise! What, but a compensation of honour and reverence most publicly given Him! Who can doubt but that the angels in heaven redoubled their hosannas, and raised their voices to a more jubilant strain, when these horrible words were uttered, to compensate and repair the outrage done to Him on earth? And we, for whom He submitted to the indignity, for whose encouragement He was pleased to undergo so shameful a reproach, shall not we also redouble our praise and thanksgiving for so much mercy and so much love? Shall we not cry out with His Apostle, every time we hear the insult offered, "My Lord and my God"?

3. *Affections.*—"O my good and suffering Jesus, can I ever forget what Thou hast been pleased to suffer for my sake? Can I ever cease to bless and praise Thee, to love and serve Thee, in return for so much kindness? I desire now specially to commemo-

rate what Thou sufferedst for my sake from so many foul reproaches and blasphemies during Thy blessed Passion. Thou wert called a blasphemer for the love of me! Yet stay; how often has my incorrigible tongue injured and offended Thee by its unjust or light discourses—perhaps, as much as that of the wicked High Priest? Now, therefore, I consecrate and dedicate this unruly member to Thee, and bind it down in a perpetual compact to bless and praise Thee, to proclaim Thy glories to all men, to defend Thy Divinity, and make known Thy mercies with all its power! It shall love to own itself Thy servant and unworthy instrument; it shall delight to descant upon Thy attributes, and Thy lovingkindness: it shall never be weary in uttering, with all fondness, Thy sweet and tender Name; even in its last utterances, when death comes to still it, it shall falter forth Thy most holy and most blessed Name. My heart, too, shall accompany it in giving Thee glory: ever studying to gain Thee praises from those that know Thee not, and praise Thee not."

Seventeenth Meditation

PETER'S DENIAL

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your dear Redeemer standing as a lamb in the midst of wolves, meek and unresisting, though surrounded by a brutal rabble; and Peter standing among the servants of the High Priest.

1. Reflect what a cruel blow to the Heart of our dear Saviour was given by the denial of Peter. He had been abandoned, indeed, by all His Apostles. Even John, the beloved, who was to display singular courage at the foot of the cross, and thereby to win the guardianship of Mary, was now at a distance; and it was evidently a part of the sufferings of Jesus in this stage of His blessed Passion to be utterly abandoned by all. Still Peter, the most courageous of the number, as he had shown himself in the Garden, draws nigh, and ventures into the crowd. Surely it must be to bring his loving Master some comfort; to give Him an assurance that his heart and those of

his companions remain faithful to Him in spite of His present ignominy. He is come, surely, to die with Him, if need be. Alas! he is come to disown and to deny Him! to forswear himself by a dreadful and a treacherous untruth, saying that he knew not the man. Such is the errand on which Peter is come; to do his kind Master no better service than publicly to disavow all connection with Him! Such is the only comfort brought to Jesus, on that last night, by the most courageous and the most zealous of His chosen followers. But then, what a wreck of the labours, lessons, and examples of three years! In vain has He been toiling to convince His Apostle that the Son of Man must suffer, and thus enter into His glory; that He must be delivered into the hands of sinners, mocked, and spit upon, and put to death. All these lessons have been thrown away. Peter does not know the man! There are all the protestations of the courageous Apostle, that even if all were to be scandalised in Jesus, he would not—evaporated at the sound of a foolish servant's voice. Yes, and there is

the solid foundation of Christ's Church, the rock on which He willed to build it, melted, like wax, before that fire of the High Priest's hall! Oh, what a cruel sight for our Blessed Lord! what an aggravation of His sufferings! How much more poignant an infliction than the strokes upon His cheek! How much deeper an insult than the spitting upon His face! Truly, He looked on His right hand and on His left, and not only were there none to know Him, but there were some to abjure Him! Ah, how often have I done the same, or worse! How often have I denied Jesus by my conduct! But what a lesson is here for me not to run any risks, or expose myself to danger as Peter did. He certainly loved Jesus much beyond what I can pretend to do; he had been instructed much better than I in the law of his Saviour, he had been provided with richer graces; yet he basely gave way before the first slight temptation and fell into the blackest of treasons! What security have I that I shall not do worse, if not always on my guard, and assiduous in prayer?

2. Reflect upon the conduct of your dear Redeemer on this painful and trying occasion. Peter was no longer worthy of His notice, much less of His affection. He had treated Him most ungratefully and most unkindly. Our Lord could in justice have abandoned him to his fate. At any rate, He might have left him till after His own sufferings were ended, and visited him with forgiveness after His resurrection. But no. He would not delay a moment to touch his heart; He would not die unreconciled with His former friend. He put aside His own sad feelings, He turned upon Peter, from the midst of them, one glance of loving reproach and remonstrance, which penetrated to the centre of his soul, dissolved the spell which had bound him, reawakened those feelings which fear had frozen and benumbed, and brought out, through the flood of tears which he shed, the anguish of his repenting soul. Oh, what a look that must have been! a look never, as long as he lived, to be effaced from Peter's memory! What a mild yet steady and penetrating glance! how truly Divine! His features

are scarcely discernible under the disfiguring influence of the outrageous treatment He had received; but His eye, unclouded in its majesty, darts a beam, which passes beyond the crowd to the outer hall, and breathes into the very recesses of the recreant Apostle's heart, and enlightens its darkness with a ray of repentance! But what ineffable goodness, condescension, and mercy are here displayed. Surely this alone was sufficient to satisfy us how high was the virtue of the Soul of our dear Jesus, above all mere human excellence! After this fall, Peter disappears entirely from the scene of the Passion. He was cured of his rashness; and though no doubt he would have wished to repair his fault by attendance on his kind and forgiving Master, during its last stages, yet he had now too well discovered his frailty to venture again into danger. To weep at a distance and alone was now his only comfort and occupation. Here again is a lesson for us, to be warned by our faults to carefulness and vigilance.

3. *Affections.*—Imagine to yourself that

look of your Saviour as cast upon you, and say: "Yes, my good and merciful Jesus, I well know and understand that reproving glance, which not once, but again and again, Thou hast cast upon me from the midst of Thy sufferings when I have offended and denied Thee. Often has Thy silent look touched my heart, and moved it to repentance, when I remembered what Thou hast endured for love of me, and how miserably I have requited it! How long have I been Thy scholar, Thy disciple, admitted to free consort with Thee, seated at Thy table; nay, Thy minister, Thy chosen servant, admitted to share with Thy Apostles; and yet I have foully denied Thee, in the face of Heaven, forgetting Thy love, and joining with Thy cruel enemies in persecuting and tormenting Thee! Oh, look then often upon me as Thou then didst upon Peter; one such loving and pitiful glance shall do more to reclaim me, when wandering, than the flash of Thy lightnings. Yes; 'Thou hast wounded me with one of Thine eyes,' my Beloved; Thou hast pierced my soul, and melted all its hardness. And when, by

Thy grace, I overcome temptation, or do or suffer something for Thy sake; let me look into that calm, loving eye, for Thy bright approval, my only reward. In it I shall read my sentence with joy, and receive an earnest of what it will one day express to me in Thy eternal bliss."

Eighteenth Meditation

JESUS IS DECLARED GUILTY OF DEATH

Preparation.—Imagine to yourself your Divine Redeemer standing meekly amidst the priests and their servants, exposed to their insults.

1. Reflect upon the solemn adjuration in the Name of the living God, which the wicked High Priest addressed to our Blessed Lord; for it bespeaks his unwilling testimony to the character of Jesus. Had he believed Him to be such as he affected to consider Him, he would have known that such an address would have been quite useless. For had the meek silence of Jesus proceeded from fear, or had He been the

culprit they affected to suppose, He would not, they well knew, be entrapped by this question, proceeding probably from hypocrisy and pretended zeal, and tending to ensnare the life of the accused. But the High Priest knew well that Jesus feared not to avow who He declared Himself to be; he knew, too, that the Name of God would have a power with Him which all the artful questions and lying witness of His enemies never would. Therefore, baffled in every attempt through these, yet determined to find Him guilty even by means of such noble and holy feelings, he put to Him the solemn question: "Adjuro te per Deum vivum, dic nobis si tu es Christus, filius Dei vivi?" Jesus would not deny His true character in the face of danger, and avowed Himself, answering: "Thou hast said it." Whereupon they all exclaimed, "Reus est mortis." Reflect deeply upon the meaning of these words, which imply nothing less than the condemnation to death of the Lord of life. The very breath which spoke so impious a decree was simply His gift; and all who uttered that sentence depended

upon His goodwill for their very existence. But in truth this parricidal sentence was a condemnation of death to themselves. They pronounced thereby the warrant of their own destruction, and the extermination of their own people. Blind, impious, and yet most impotent men! Tools of your own wicked passions, yet unconscious instruments in the hands of a gracious and saving Providence, which, from the bitter root of your perversity and malice, would cause to spring forth the sweet fruit of salvation. So did the Blessed Jesus overlook your impotent malignity, and in that hour raise up His eyes to the throne of His Father in heaven, and view the cause of mankind canvassed in His eternal councils, the sins of men numbered and weighed in His balances, and found beyond number or reckoning. He sees expiation demanded from Himself, who had offered to be the Victim for them; and He heard the same sentence which is now blasphemously pronounced upon earth, most righteously uttered in heaven. And the meek Lamb of God bowed down His head in humble

resignation, saying, "Thou art just, O Father! and all Thy ways are right." But now contemplate the scene which ensues. For upon the sentence being pronounced, His Passion of outward suffering may be said to have begun. For the fury of the enraged multitude is now let loose upon Him uncontrolled; encouraged by the applause, the laughter, and the jeers of their superiors, who show their approval of each new insult and outrage upon His sacred person. Behold, then, your Saviour, whom your soul tenderly loves, not only blasphemed and grossly insulted by impious language, but actually struck with the hand, plucked by the hair and beard, and His sacred countenance spit upon! These are indignities which, if we saw committed against the vilest criminal, we should resent as brutal and most inhuman. Nor is there a man who would, in worldly language, be able to hold up his head, if once publicly assailed by any one of them. Yet the Blessed Jesus—not only descended from the royal line, but by true right King of Israel, yea, God of Israel—submits in

silence and imperturbable patience to this accumulated outrage! Oh, what a lesson for me, whose pride boils under the slightest insult, whose resentment is roused by the smallest affront! Shame to me to call myself a follower of Jesus, and to be so little like Him!

2. Reflect now upon this distressing scene under a new light. Imagine all its actors changed except one, and that one the Person of your Blessed Redeemer. In place of the others, imagine that you see those real causers of His sufferings, your own passions and sins. Yes; it was not so much the High Priest of the Jews that sat upon the seat of judgment whence the sentence issued; it was the proud corruption of my heart. Dressed out, indeed, in sacerdotal robes; assuming the title of a dedication to God, yet full of pride, hypocrisy, and deceit, it has presumptuously dared to question and canvass the titles which Jesus has to my love and service. It has rejected His claim to be sole King of my soul and heart, Lord of all my powers, Master of my every act; and has

listened to the many false witnesses which its corruption has again and again suborned to put aside His claims. And when, in fact, I have on some dreadful occasion condemned Him within myself, it was with the unanimous consent of every bad passion, echoing back the sentence to put Jesus aside—to crucify Him again by sin. Yes, such were the real assessors of this infamous Sanhedrin : these were the haughty Pharisees, the vain scribes, the unbelieving Sadducees, that broke forth into that horrible sentence against Jesus, and, as far as their malice could go, sentenced Him to death. Then it was that the fury of my evil inclinations, freed from all check, broke forth upon Him, insulted and impiously outraged Him. Oh! how did my presumptuous folly suppose it could hoodwink those eyes that are brighter than the sun, to offend Him with impunity? How did those repeated transgressions of His law, in word, and thought, and deed, strike Him on the face! How did those uncharitable words against my neighbours, members of His mystical Body, pluck His

venerable hair! How did that disrespect for His sanctuary, my cold indifference to His sacraments, my contempt or abuse of His graces, spit in His very face, and insult Him most outrageously! How did my vanity and levity, my lusts and evil desires, buffet and contemn Him! Ah! such is the true account of this fearful scene; and the real executioner of my dear Jesus was this self of mine! Thus have I treated Him every time I have sinned; and it was the accumulation of such treatments, by myself and others, that caused, and outwardly rehearsed, the afflicting spectacle of that His last night in mortal state!

3. *Affections.*—"I know not, my loving Redeemer, with what feelings I best can contemplate this portion of Thy most sorrowful Passion. Shall it be with indignation against those who were guilty of such barbarity? Or with admiration of Thy Divine conduct, Thy patience and meekness? Shall I contemplate Thy goodness towards me, or my unworthy conduct towards Thee? Rather will I adore in silence this marvellous mystery of Thee,

my incarnate God, suffering for my sake. I will try to blend my other feelings into one of unqualified, grateful love. I will love Thee, my God, all the more because Thou didst submit to be condemned for my sake to an ignominious death. The more Thou art defaced by blows or spittle, the comelier art Thou to me, and the more desired by my heart. And forasmuch as my sins have been the cause of such atrocities committed on Thy sacred Person, I will love Thee still the more; that my affection may be as some drops of balm in the grievous wounds I have inflicted upon Thee. In opposition to the impious sentence pronounced upon Thee, I will cry out, with all the loving ones who have thus gained their sentence of pardon: 'Live, dear Jesus, live! and that in my heart.'"

Nineteenth Meditation

JESUS IS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Divine Saviour, His hands tied behind Him like a criminal, pushed forward by the Jewish crowd to the tribunal of the Roman governor.

1. Reflect upon the refined malice of the Jewish priests and elders, which would not allow their passion so far to blind them as to make them take summary vengeance upon our Lord; but prompted them to proceed through all the forms of Roman law; that so, on the one hand, the punishment might be more severe and cruel, being that of crucifixion, and on the other, the public might be deceived into a belief of the justice of a sentence pronounced by a foreign tribunal, and acquit them of all animosity and resentment in their proceedings. Having, therefore, satiated their cruelty by wreaking on Him all they ventured, short of murder, during the preceding night; they rise early, and, followed

by the mob of their satellites, and such a crowd as the occasion was sure to collect, they drag Jesus as a criminal to the governor's house. At the first aspect of such accusers, and such an accused, the cause ought to be decided. They, scarcely recovered from the cruel revels of the previous night, but bearing all the traces of its infamous passions in their inflamed countenances; He, already bruised and ill-treated in a barbarous manner: they, having violated all law and principles of justice, by inflicting such cruelty upon one uncondemned and unheard; He, having rather a right to charge them for the injuries inflicted, than cause to defend Himself against such aggressors! Such a case as this, presented before any tribunal possessed of the slightest principles of justice, should have instantly been dismissed; or plaintiff and defendant made to change places. Nor is it possible to suppose that the Roman president, watchful, of course, over the interests of his nation, and attentive to the smallest movement in a people so prone to rebellion as the Jews, cognisant

of their growing expectations of a deliverer from foreign bondage, should have been ignorant of the enthusiasm which the wonderful powers exercised by Jesus had excited. He must, or ought, to have made inquiries, and satisfied himself that from Him the state and civil authority had nothing to fear. Indeed, when our Divine Saviour is presented before him, we do not see him evince the slightest eagerness to investigate the case, or to take it up with that warmth which governors of distant and lately acquired countries generally display upon grave accusations of treason. He therefore probably knows, that had it been any real treason, the accusers on this occasion, who display so cordial a zeal, would most probably have been engaged in it. There seems, however, to be a deep design of heavenly Providence in allowing these wily rulers to be outwitted by their own devices. Not only, by presenting the Son of God to the heathen governor, are they securing the fulfilment of His repeated declaration that He should die the death of the cross, but they are unintentionally

bringing about the accomplishment of another and more ancient prediction. The sceptre was not to be taken away from Juda till the Messias had come. And perhaps we may say that this delivery of Jesus over to the Roman power was the first great national acknowledgment of the departure of native authority, and of submission to foreign rule. Now for the first time did they exclaim, "Non habemus regem nisi Cæsarem." "Si hunc dimittis, non es amicus Cæsaris." Never before, perhaps, did the priests and highest authorities in the country make so decisive a declaration of homage and servitude as now, when their rage prompted them to make this sacrifice of the authority to which they had hitherto clung. They owned the sceptre to have passed from Juda, and on that day the true Silo came; He to whom it of right belonged, as the Saviour of His people.

2. Reflect now upon the indictment they prefer against Jesus, at this iniquitous tribunal which they have chosen. We have already considered the disgraceful subterfuges to which the priests were put to fix

on some palpable or plausible charge against Jesus. We saw how, after hearing and rejecting many testimonies, they at last fixed upon that which attested Him to have said, that if the temple were to be destroyed, He could build it up again. We naturally expect this supposed blasphemy to be the great and leading head of accusation against Him. But now the iniquitous wretches have again changed their ground, and have chosen another more palpably untenable. "We have found this man," they say, "perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is Christ the King" (Luke xxiii. 2). Upon the first of these points our Blessed Saviour had been most artfully tempted, and had displayed His wonderful wisdom, in defeating the attempts to ensnare Him. He had clearly said, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." But the latter part of their accusation goes beyond all the rest in wickedness, ingratitude, and blasphemous impiety. These they more unreservedly displayed later, when they exclaimed, "Whoever maketh

himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar;" and "We have a law, and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John xix. 12, 7). Is it possible that such a charge should be made against Blessed Jesus, by men who were looking out for the Christ of God, as one who should drive Cæsar not only from the promised land, but from his very imperial throne, and wrest from his hands the sceptre of the universe? Would it have appeared credible, if not recorded in God's unerring Word, that men could have been so blinded by passion, as that to carry an unjust and cruel charge they should belie their dearest inclinations before all their countrymen, and blaspheme, in the face of heaven, what they considered the most splendid mercy which the God of Israel had in store for their nation? "Whoever makes himself a king must be put to death, as a rebel to Cæsar; the law justly condemns to the same penalty one who assumes the character of the Son of God." In these propositions sentence of death is passed by the Jewish senate upon

the Messias whenever He might appear after their own hearts, such as they desired Him! Is there any mystery of iniquity false and lying, too complicated or too deep for us to expect in the heart of man, after such evidence as this? What villainy and unredeemable perversity was needed, before men could frame a charge against the sinless, spotless Lamb of God!

3. *Affections.* — Sympathise with your Redeemer thus unjustly persecuted by the raging malice of His enemies, and say: "How shall I repress my indignation against the villains who thus abandon every sentiment of patriotism and consistency, as well as every principle of righteousness and gratitude, to deliver Thee, the benefactor as well as the Saviour of Thy people, into the hands of the Gentiles, that Thou mayest by them be cruelly tortured and put to death? But it is not with such feelings that Thou wouldst have Thy blessed Passion to be meditated on, especially by us. For how often have we ourselves brought Thee before the iniquitous tribunal of this world, to be by it condemned! Even whenever,

by our behaviour, or through our indiscreet speeches, we have caused Thy truths or Thy injunctions to be lightly discussed or easily put aside! Let us therefore take to ourselves some portion of the shame which we cast upon those who treated Thee with such indignity; and try to compensate our guilt by thankfulness to Thee for having suffered even this for love of us, and by a loving determination ever to stand up as Thine advocates and vindicators before the false arraignments and foolish cavils of unbelieving or thoughtless men. We will ever arise for Thy cause; and if the world cries down Thy supreme law, we will exclaim the louder, 'Non habemus regem nisi Jesum.' We will acknowledge Thee in the face of men for our sovereign and rightful Lord; we will not allow the smallest prerogatives of Thy state to be touched, and we will strain every nerve to exalt and spread Thy kingdom over the world that knows Thee not."

Twentieth Meditation

THE RETRACTATION OF JUDAS AND HIS DEATH

1. Reflect upon the feelings which must have agitated the traitor Judas after he had delivered up his good Master. At first he gloated upon his thirty pieces of silver, and counted them over again and again, and imagined he had made an excellent bargain. Still he would not easily forget the price, and the infamy attached to his act. Perhaps he flattered himself with the idea that Jesus would never allow Himself to be ill-treated by His enemies; but as He had overthrown them in the Garden, so He would foil and utterly vanquish them in their own Council Chamber. Or is it possible that at the same time he may have reckoned on the leniency and forgiveness of Jesus, and fully calculated upon pardon? However this may be, it would not be long before unhappy feelings would begin to creep into his soul, and trouble him with vague apprehensions. The evil spirit which

had at first concealed all the dark aspects of his crime, when it was his purpose to tempt him, would now begin gradually to unfold them to urge him to destruction. Like our first parents, he had been tempted by the fruits of his treachery; his thirty pieces of silver had appeared fair to his eye, and worth any sacrifice of duty; now that he has them, he discovers that he is naked and deserted. While the rest of the disciples consult together in secret, or, like Peter and John, even approach the scene of their Master's trial, Judas does not draw nigh to either. He skulks about during the long dreary night, shunning every former acquaintance, trembling at the possibility of meeting Mary, who may ask if he knows what has become of her Son; or Peter, who may in his indignation seize him by the throat, and avenge on him his Master's cruel betrayal; and while he thus ventures not near the dwellings of any of his former friends, who were necessarily the friends of Jesus, he knows too well the scorn and detestation in which he is held by those who have used him as their tool

in the most disgraceful part of their conduct to thrust himself amongst them. Like all traitors, he feels himself equally odious to his old and new friends. He prowls like a wolf about the precincts of the High Priest's palace, afraid to accost any one, yet borne on by a tormenting eagerness to inquire concerning the probable fate of Jesus; and perhaps, concealing his anxiety under a studied indifference, he asks of such as he thinks cannot recognise him what appear to be the intentions of the priests. Too soon he begins to fear the worst, for all tell him that they have pronounced Him worthy of death, have determined to give Him up in the morning to the Roman president, and are in the meantime venting their rage and impiety, in insults and blows, upon His sacred Person. Now does the vileness and cruelty of his treason begin to open upon him; now does he begin to see the abyss of wretchedness that yawns before him, the barbarous treatment he has brought upon his kind, generous Master and Friend, the murder that will probably be committed on Him on the morrow through his crime,

the infamy that awaits him, the universal execration of all posterity, the worse than hellish torments which conscience is preparing for him, and which he already begins to feel! And in the morning when he rises early, and sees the sorrowful procession moving towards Pilate's house; when he hears the yells of the mob, "Crucify Him," and sees in the countenances of the priests ample evidence of their fixed determination to proceed to extremities, how does he curse the silver that allured him to a deed of such black iniquity, and the ill-fated hour when he listened to its temptation. Hence, overcome at length with remorse, that purse of ill-gotten wealth, which is at his girdle, is truly heavier to his neck than that millstone with which it would have been better for him to have been cast into the sea; and anxious to be rid of its load at any risk, he hurries to the members of the priestly council, who were yet sitting, flings it at their feet with these solemn words, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood."

2. Reflect now on the terrible answer given him by these hardened partners of

his crime: "Quid ad nos? Tu videris." This is the answer which we must ever expect from all companions in iniquity when its punishment overtakes us. They will laugh at our complaints; they will scoff at our repentance; they will turn their backs on our entreaties for succour. When we tell them that it was following their advice, that it was to please them, that we committed sin; and that now we are suffering in consequence, this will be their hard-hearted reply: "What is all this to us? Look thou to it." And on the last day such will be the only sympathy we may expect from those who have been our patrons or encouragers in evil; all will abandon us on that occasion, and leave us to our solitary liability. But mark withal the abominable hypocrisy of these hoary sinners, who affect a scruple at touching or applying to sacred purposes the price of blood which they had not hesitated to pay. And was there not a providential, and in a manner a prophetical, application of this sum in the purchase of a field for the burial of strangers? as if to show that the price

of Jesus' blood, rejected by the synagogue, was to be for the benefit of the Gentiles; and Calvary, the Christian Haceldama, was their exclusive inheritance. But turn once more to Judas. See the red-hot sword of despair which this cold answer plunges into his heart; how he scowls with knitted brows upon the priests as he sees the contemptuous sneer upon their lips. Before he was their dear and faithful friend, welcome and warmly received whenever he stole from his Master's side on Gethsemane to join their midnight councils. Now he is a Galilean in their eyes, an importunate man who has had his due, and is no more wanted. His sight is loathsome to them; had he not foreseen this? They do not offer him any consolation, or attempt to convince him that Jesus has deserved His fate, and that he has no reproach to make himself for having delivered Him up to justice. No; "Quid ad nos? Tu videris." He rushes from their presence, gnawing his heart with rage. O wretched Judas! whither art thou hastening? That is not the direction that leads to thy Lord; He is now in

the house of Pilate, where they are scourging Him. Break through the crowd; push aside the soldiers; cast thyself at His feet, and, kissing them in repentance, efface that other murderous kiss, and He will forgive thee; let His blood be sprinkled on thee, and though thy sin be red as scarlet, thou shalt become white as snow. Give to the world this glorious spectacle of repentance. But no; the demon of despair, clinging at his breast, whispers in his ear that for him alone on earth there is no hope of forgiveness, that he alone is excepted from redemption. Life is no longer supportable, and he hangs himself, and, falling, is rent to pieces!

3. *Affections.*—"Wretched man! no pity pursues thy fate, no compassion softens the meditation upon thine end! Thou an Apostle, a friend of the Bridegroom, an individual companion of Jesus! Thy fellows, too, were hung upon gibbets, or their bodies were racked and rent, and all the world has honoured and loved them for it, and their burial-places are glorious, and their relics kissed and deemed holy. Thou sufferedst as cruel a death as they, and hast

upon thy hanging corpse the execration of the world! It costs them as much to be a traitor to Thee, dear Jesus! as it does to be Thy faithful follower and Apostle. And shall I ever place thirty pieces of silver, much less worthless pleasure, honour, or fame against fidelity to Thy cause, to Thy truth, and to Thy law? Never, dear Lord! and if unhappily I sometimes, like Peter, forget myself and Thee, never let me, Judas-like, betray Thee."

Twenty-first Meditation

OUR SAVIOUR'S SILENCE

Preparation.—Represent to yourself our Blessed Lord, bound like a criminal, and standing before Pilate's tribunal.

1. Reflect how particularly the Evangelists notice the peculiar character of our Saviour's defence when standing before the different tribunals at which He was so iniquitously arraigned. First when brought before the High Priest Caiphas, and asked if He answered nothing to the depositions against Him. The Gospel adds, "Jesus

autem tacebat" (Matt. xxvi. 63). Again, when placed before Pilate and interrogated by him, "He answered him not to any word" (xxvii. 14). A third time He is closely questioned by Herod, who would easily be induced to effect His liberation; but here, in like manner, "He answered him nothing" (Luke xxiii. 9). This conduct in any other might have been suspected of proceeding from a fear of committing himself by an unguarded expression, or giving his enemies a hold on him, by any heat or passion. But in Jesus this could not possibly be imagined. Or in others we might suppose that they were overawed by the terror incident to persons put upon trial for their lives, or by the great dignity of the presence wherein they stood, or by a consciousness of shame or guilt. But who, without blasphemy, would even surmise the possibility of such motives in the Son of God? No; when the Eternal Word of God, that came into the world to enlighten it with heavenly wisdom, is silent, there must be a deep mystery in the silence. And first it was necessary, to complete that character

of meekness which the prophet had given Him, that He should be like a lamb before His shearer, not opening His mouth. What an idea does it give us of the serenity of His soul, of His elevation above earthly things, of His power of abstracting Himself from the tumult and passion that surrounded Him, and living in the pure and radiant sphere of His own celestial thoughts. For it was no sullen or obstinate refusal to speak, but a calm and meek silence representative of His inward serenity; so that if the Centurion at His death, upon hearing the loud cry wherewith He yielded His spirit, was justified in exclaiming, "Truly this was the Son of God," any one who properly apprehended His silence at the tribunals, should from it have come to the same conclusion. And, in fact, it is evident that in His case was reversed that ordinary principle that silence in one accused is equivalent to an admission of guilt. For the Jews, with their High Priest, were utterly confounded by His silence, and baffled in their further proceedings against Him, and Pilate repeated, after noticing it, his con-

viction of His innocence; and even Herod, though he brutally insulted Him, drew thence, as Pilate inferred, no evidence of His being guilty. What a new and what a wonderful species of defence! What a truly Divine eloquence, far more pathetic and far more efficacious than the most laboured display of words would have been! It was a species of pleading, which none before had ever tried, and which none even of His own martyrs ever perfectly imitated.

2. Reflect upon the lesson which Jesus hereby gave us, and the example which He set before us. Silence at all times is, if not a virtue, a preservative from much sin, and it becomes the duty of a Christian to learn when it ought to be observed, and when it may be broken. It is certain that we shall generally be safest by remaining silent, when under provocation, and scarcely ever allowing ourselves to attempt a defence, however temperate. "Adolescens loquere in tua causa vix," says the wise man. For, too easily will self-love lead us to some transgression of the limits of truth or the duty of respect or we shall, in our anxiety to repel accusa-

tion, become ourselves accusers, and commit a breach of charity; or we may lose our temper and injure our cause instead of helping it, by violence or imprudence. But if we remain silent, we certainly escape all these dangers; we put our defence in the hands of God, and we acquire additional merit of patience. When King Ezechias was insulted grossly by the letter of Senacherib, he did not reply to its bitter taunts, nor call his councillors together to see how he might best retort them upon him, but he went into the temple, and spread the letter before the face of God, and with tears placed his cause in His hands; and his prayer was heard, and God that very night avenged him by the destruction of 185,000 of his enemies (4 Reg. xix. 35). And this silence will be the more appropriate in all cases where, like his, the insult, though personally directed to us, is indirectly aimed at our ministry or at His truth. If for instance we are insulted in religious discussion, whether by word of mouth or in writing, how much more will our cause triumph, if we overlook whatever is directed against us, or at most

meekly put it aside, and confine ourselves to rebutting the arguments of our opponent? If a heathen could so far have subdued his passions as to say to his adversary, that raised his staff over him in anger, "Strike, but listen," how much more should we, ministers of Christ, be ready to suffer any personal injury, if through its patient endurance we can induce men to hearken to the truths we defend. In fact a contrary course will only serve to irritate our feelings, and disturb the clearness of our ideas and diminish the force of our words. But moreover, when we revenge ourselves by replying to personalities, or false imputations (where the cause we defend does not require it), we deprive ourselves of the fruit of patience, which is incompatible with all idea of revenge. And further, we hereby disturb that perpetual calm which the Christian should ever study to keep, in imitation of his Blessed Saviour during His Passion. It is not difficult for us to decide when and how to speak, but it requires much virtue, and a close study of our Lord's example, to learn how to keep silence.

3. *Affections.*—"Blessed Jesus, eternal uncreated Wisdom! no less instructing us when Thou closest Thy lips and refusest to unseal them, in obedience to the threats of Thine enemies, than when Thou openest them in reply to the questions of Thy disciples! What a sublime display of the most heavenly eloquence would not Thy Gospel have contained, hadst Thou condescended to plead Thy cause before Caiphas, or Pilate, or Herod! Yet what have we lost? Those few simple words, 'Jesus autem tacebat,' give me far greater cause of admiration, inspire me with a profounder conviction of Thy innocence, propose to me sublimer lessons, and show me Thy enemies more completely baffled than the most triumphant defence of words could have done. But if Thou art thus silent in Thine own defence, let me never be so; but whenever Thy law or Thy goodness is assailed by the ignorance or the malice of men, let me be ever ready to rise in their defence, and to raise my voice powerfully in their behalf. Let me never allow the smallest charge against what Thou hast revealed to pass unnoticed,

and unconfuted. But in thus defending Thy cause I will be careful never to mix up with it mine own, but will carefully copy Thee, when engaged in self-defence, by opposing a meek and modest silence to the clamours or calumnies of all personal assaults."

Twenty-second Meditation

JESUS IS SENT TO HEROD

Preparation.—Represent to yourself our Blessed Lord standing before the tribunal of this wicked and irreverent king.

1. Reflect how Pilate, hearing that Jesus was from Galilee, determined to take advantage of this circumstance for the purpose of shaking off the responsibility laid upon him by the Jews, and to deliver up Jesus to the Jewish king, as one subject to his jurisdiction. Once more the Son of God is paraded through the streets of Jerusalem, followed by a mob furious for His blood, and by those who set them on—the priests and scribes. They reach the palace of Herod, and there commence a repetition of

their charges. Now probably they will press different accusations from what were calculated for a heathenish tribunal. Herod will care little for treasons against Cæsar, his tyrant, but he must pretend great zeal for the temple and the law, and great indignation at any pretended prophet. Those men therefore "stood by, earnestly accusing Him" (Luke xxiii. 10). But in the meantime Herod and his court had been greatly interested at the very first coming of Jesus. They had heard much concerning Him from public fame, and their pride or station had prevented them from mingling in the multitude, to witness His marvellous works. They imagine, however, as Simon Magus afterwards did of the Apostles, that interest would, at any time, be a sufficient inducement to Jesus to exercise His power before them. Blessed Jesus! is such the fruit of Thy three years' heavenly life before all Thy people, Thy divine discourses, Thy sublime doctrines, Thy pure disinterested conduct? That so conscious were these men of their own baseness, so diffident of all virtue in the

human form, as that they should have looked even upon Thee, as men would upon a juggler or trickster, who would now give Herod and his court a private exhibition of His skill to save his life! Nay, and so reasonable does this appear to them, that when Thou refusest, they deem Thee a fool, making light of Thee, and mocking at Thee. They dress Thee in a white garment, and send Thee thus, publicly disgraced, through the streets to Pilate! See now the gibes and jeers of the fickle mob, who now enjoy this spectacle, as though they had not the day before stood around Thee in mute astonishment at the wisdom which flowed from Thy lips? Are men changed in so short a time? Are their understandings lost in one night so completely that they should not see that they were the fools to be so easily turned from reverence to scoffs, from admiration to hatred? Surely there was no part of our dear Saviour's Passion so rudely ignominious as this. For to be struck on the cheek and spit upon was the brutal, unpremeditated treatment of a coarse rabble;

but to be thus clothed in a fool's attire was the deliberate act of a king with all his court, who thus seem to sanction the conduct of the mob. And Pilate, too, could not mistake the obvious import of Herod's decision. For seeing Jesus return to him so arrayed, and at the same time acquitted of crime (as he himself afterwards proclaimed), he could not but consider it equivalent to the impious declaration, that the Son of God showed too little wisdom to be capable of the great attempts with which the priests and elders charged Him! For thus evidently did Herod acquit Jesus, at the expense of His understanding! Oh speak to them but one word, dear Lord, as Thou didst to the Herodians once before, when they showed Thee the coin, and utterly confound their machinations, and turn their intended ridicule upon themselves! Preach, in this fool's garment, some of Thy sublime doctrines, and put them to scorn, and show them in act how the folly of this world is the wisdom of God! But no: Thou art silent, wishing to check my presumption and pride when

men insult my judgment: Thou art silent too because Thou art willing to suffer all things for my sake.

2. Reflect upon what the Gospel says was the issue of this sending of Jesus to Herod. "And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day; for before they were enemies to one another" (v. 12). From the connection intimated between our Lord's being sent, and this reconciliation, as well as from the early hour from which Pilate had been engaged with Him, which precluded its having taken place before, we may justly conclude that this attention on the governor's part brought it about. He cared not what the issue might be to Jesus, though he believed Him innocent. Herod was welcome to deal with Him as he listed, so as He was a peace-offering between them! We cannot but be struck at seeing how cheap, so to speak, our Blessed Saviour was held in His Passion, by all who thought that any profit was to be made out of His sacrifice. The High Priest pronounced it better that He should die, however undeserving, than that

the nation should run any risk of being harassed by the Romans. Judas scrupled not to betray Him, when thirty pieces of silver were to be made by it. Peter hesitated not to renounce Him, the moment he could thereby escape the scorn of the priests' menials; and now Pilate throws away His life, as a lure to Herod's favour! Truly, O Blessed Jesus, Thou *didst* here become the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people! But do we stand in no danger of acting as these perverse men did towards Jesus? Do we not occasionally even now, may we not in our future lives, run the risk of compromising at His expense with some of His enemies? When out of deference to prejudices existing in those who know Him not, we give up any institution of His Church, what do we else but surrender Him to the will of those who are in opposition to Him? If we refrain, for instance, from public homage of the adorable Eucharist, from false shame lest we should be considered fond and superstitious, do we otherwise than Pilate did—that is, make a sacrifice of Him to

peace with affections and ideas which do Him wrong? If we abstain from celebrating at the altar as often as our own hearts would desire, in compliance with practice which we know the Church would not willingly approve, do we not send Jesus away from us, in the hope of thereby purchasing peace with men frail and evil as ourselves? If, from a desire of living in harmony with those who know not the wisdom of faith which Jesus hath revealed to us, we suppress the public declaration of some doctrines unpalatable to flesh and blood, or preach them coldly and feebly, or shrink from defending them in conversation, do we not reject the Divine Word, the uncreated Truth, and deliver it into the hands of scoffers, who dress Him up as in a fool's garment, turning to ridicule and making nought of these sublime and beautiful dogmas which we thus tacitly abandon? Oh! let such a foul treachery never be laid to our charge! Let us, revering the Eternal Wisdom of God, manifested to us in His holy revelations, to their fullest extent, honour publicly, and

without shame, even those forms that it assumes, in the practices sanctioned by the Church, His spouse, which to the miserable wisdom of this world seem folly. If Jesus was mocked by Herod and his army, what wonder if His doctrines receive the same treatment from the world and its followers.

3. *Affections.* — "O Jesus, uncreated Wisdom, I adore Thee, turned to foolishness for my sake! Who would wear the philosopher's cloak, the badge of vain, presumptuous learning, when Thou art disguised in the garb of folly? Who will not put it on after Thee? To be meek and forgiving, to be silent under provocations, to turn the cheek to him that smiteth it, all this is folly in the eyes of thy enemies —let me put on these qualities. To be humble and lowly in our own estimation, to fly the praise of men, and do good in obscurity, are all to the world characteristics of a weak and foolish mind, incapable of great public virtue—let me be distinguished by this accounted poverty of spirit. To be chaste and pure, a hater of pleasure, and a despiser of dissipation and amusement,

is considered the habit of a weak-minded bigot—make me ever cognisable by it for Thy disciple. Teach me that folly which consists in having the simplicity and docility of a child, the guilelessness of the dove. Teach me that wise foolishness which will make me all to all, that I may gain all, by stooping to the ideas and conceptions of the ignorant, and speaking their own language, that I may instil into their hearts Thy faith and Thy law. And in fine choose in us the foolish things of this world, that Thou mayest therewith confound the wise, that no flesh may glory in Thy sight."

Twenty-third Meditation

JESUS IS SCOURGED

Preparation.—Imagine to yourself your Blessed Redeemer tied to a column, and cruelly scourged by the Roman soldiery.

1. Reflect upon the impious conduct of Pilate, when he declared to the Jews that he would correct Jesus and let Him go.

Impious and blasphemous idea! To correct Him who is the wisdom of the Eternal Father, the light and splendour of Heaven, the teacher and inspirer of prophets, the joy of the angels, purity, holiness, perfection itself! And who is this that undertakes to correct Him? One of the lewdest, unjustest, most tyrannical, most odious of heathens! He undertakes to teach morality and virtue to the spotless Son of God; he proposes to chastise Him for impiously imputed crimes, and to send Him into the world again, an amended man! And how was this correction to be effected? By the scourge! By the punishment of slaves, of the vilest of mankind! Good God! Is it possible that the worst malice of the devil can have imagined the possibility of such thoughts being entertained by wicked men, and can have suggested them to their minds? Is it conceivable that the blindness of passion could have led any one into such an excess of madness as is implied in entertaining such an idea? But besides this mockery of all virtue, how insane was the hope of slaking the thirst of blood

displayed by the furious mob, by causing some to flow. As well might he have hoped to stay the thirst-worn traveller in the desert from hastening on, by showing him at a short distance a pool of water. It was but exciting still further their savage cry for His blood; it was encouraging them to press on eagerly till they should procure His death.

2. Reflect how Pilate actually proceeds to the execution of his infamous offer, which he even fancies is a kindness and a favour to Jesus! He delivers Him up to his Roman soldiers to be scourged. Now contemplate at leisure the scene that follows. He is placed in the hands of probably the most hardened race of men on earth; men inured to carnage; every one of them ready, when commanded, to be an executioner, the office reserved in later times for one who is deemed an outcast; men who hate the stranger and the conquered, and who ever bore a particular antipathy to the Jewish nation. Now to the absolute power of these men Jesus is abandoned; they see given up to them,

not a hardened, rough criminal, one like themselves, whom they would probably have sympathised with, or whom they would have thought it but an everyday occupation to torture, but one whose very appearance proves Him to be of the noblest descent, and of the tenderest frame—one whose modesty and bashfulness is keenly sensitive to the disgraceful exposure to nakedness and ignominious punishment—one whose meek and calm demeanour, so at variance with their brutality, stimulates their savage cruelty—still more, one whose alleged crime is the desire and attempt to drive them and their whole race out of Palestine, and overthrow their empire, which gives them, for their bread, the plunder of the world. What wonder that the scourging inflicted by these hardened wretches should have even been represented as one of the cruellest parts of our Blessed Redeemer's Passion? What wonder that He Himself should have almost always alluded to it when He spoke of His crucifixion? For if to any man it was so disgraceful an infliction, that St.

Paul himself pleaded his right as a Roman citizen in bar of its execution, what must it have been in this instance? Well, now see the innocent Lamb of God, surrounded by this ruffianly mob, the subject of their coarse jests and gross ribaldry; such men as St. Ignatius Martyr afterwards characterised by the name of *leopards*. See how they strip Him with rude hands; how tightly they bind His wrists, and tie Him to the pillar. Gracious God! Is it possible that Thou wilt allow His virginal flesh to be touched by a scourge; is it possible that Thou wilt permit the ignominious lash to tear and disfigure that most comely and holy of bodies, formed by Thine own immediate agency in the pure womb of Mary, the most precious work of Thy hands since the creation of the world? Angels of God! can you withhold your indignation? Can ye refrain from rushing on this mad soldiery, and overthrowing (as ye did Heliodorus) those who are about to treat your Master, your happiness and joy, as a vile malefactor, as the lowest of slaves; those who will proceed to tear and

bruise His adorable body, and sprinkle His blood over that profane floor? But no: there seems to be no mercy, no pity for Jesus either on earth or in heaven: He is abandoned to the anger of God and the fury of man. The executioners surround Him with savage delight, and shower on Him their cruel blows, till He is covered with blood, and gashed and swollen over all His body.

3. *Affections.*—Pause for some time in the contemplation of this atrocious spectacle, which will be the subject of the following meditation, and abstracting from the motive of your Saviour's sufferings, excite yourself to a feeling of pure sympathy for Him, as one whom you love, and say: "O my most meek and loving Jesus! is it possible that men can have been found so barbarous, so dead to every feeling of humanity, as thus brutally to treat Thee? Can any one have endured for a moment the spectacle of Thy sacred body mangled, Thy limbs, which had never failed Thee in doing good, rent and bruised, Thy precious blood, every drop of which was a world's

ransom, poured out in streams and trodden on by the vile wretches who are tormenting Thee? Oh, this was really too much to submit to; this portion of Thy sufferings ought surely to have been spared Thee! Had it been any ordinary friend that was so treated, had it been a brother, or one most dear to me in the flesh, I might at least have acknowledged that some sin or frailty had made him deserve it in the eyes of God. But Thou, the Holy One, the unstained, the perfect image of God, nay His Consubstantial Son, treated thus infamously, thus barbarously, art a sight beyond endurance! How shall I ever love Thee as I ought, after witnessing all this? How much dearer oughtest Thou to be to me, bruised and torn, than if I had only known Thee comely and beautiful among the sons of men. Let me, however unworthy, sympathise in these Thy sufferings; let me feel all their indignity, all their pain, and let me never be one of those whose hearts remain unmoved in the contemplation of Thy cruel treatment."

Twenty-fourth Meditation

JESUS IS SCOURGED (*continued*)

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Blessed Redeemer tied to a pillar and cruelly scourged by the Roman soldiery.

1. Reflect how the brutal executioners proceed to the task of inflicting cruel torments upon our Lord. Having bound Him to the pillar, they deal their furious blows upon His sacred shoulders, back, chest, and arms. First His tender flesh swells and inflames, then the skin becomes torn, and the blood oozes through gashes that begin to be formed; then more copious streams pour down on the pavement. At length every part is covered by one continuous bruise, and the flesh is torn in flakes from the bones. One wretch succeeds another in the cruel work, till they are wearied out, and their sinewy frames exhausted, though the patience of their Divine Victim remains unmoved. What a piteous spectacle does our dear Jesus now present! What a contrast to what He was but the evening before,

when seated at His banquet of love with His twelve, and John, the beloved disciple, leaning on His bosom! If that disciple saw Him during this cruel flagellation, what a tender sorrow must he not have felt, and how bitterly deplored the sad change of His aspect! And ought I not to feel even as that beloved disciple felt for my dear Saviour's sufferings? Was He not as much my Saviour as his? When this sorrowful act in the sacred tragedy was ended, our Lord is untied from the column, and left faint and bleeding, and deserted. There is no friend near to aid Him. His disciples are away, and the brutal executioners are the last to render Him any assistance. Exhausted with loss of blood, His soul only retained in His body by the Divinity, that He may accomplish His sufferings on Calvary, He puts again the rough woollen clothes upon His mangled limbs, and thus increases His excruciating pains.

Consider, too, the change which has taken place in His position, with regard to the people. He is now a disgraced, de-

graded character. The lash has touched Him, has cruelly torn Him. He is now before them as a tried and condemned criminal, as a public malefactor. They will not believe that their priests could have gone to such extremities as to deliver a descendant of David to the heathen's scourge without sufficient cause. But, however innocent, He cannot again hold up His head among the children of His people. One who has been scourged can hope for no further influence among them. He must give up all pretensions to be their Messias. Who will now own Him as such? Oh, how many, upon seeing Him thus treated, denied Him like Peter! How many not only swore that they never had known the man, but regretted that they ever had followed or known Him! How many were ashamed at this first step in the scandal of the Cross!

2. Reflect upon the motives which impelled our adorable Jesus to submit to a suffering as disgraceful as it was cruel. His prophet had before declared it, saying, "Cujus livore sanati sumus;" "Attritus

est propter scelera nostra." It was for our sake; and this in a twofold sense. First, that He might redeem us. For it seems evident that He deemed the work of our redemption incomplete, unless it purchased our hearts to Him as well as our souls. He suffered, therefore, for our sins, to save us from their slavery, and from their eternal consequences; but He chose to perform this work in such a way as might best secure our affections besides, by testifying to us what He was ready and most willing to suffer for us. Hence this almost superfluous suffering of so many and such cruel preliminary torments, which form perhaps the bitterest portion of His Passion; but what hardened, what obdurate hearts ours must be, which required such means to bring them to His love! What a miserable, ungrateful being am I, if, after all this, I resist His calls and claims to my affections, and surrender not my entire undivided heart to His divine love!

Besides this motive for so much suffering, Jesus had likewise in view my improvement. He wished to give me an

example of patience and silent endurance, not only under the severest infliction which may visit me from the hand of God, but under such unmerited sufferings as may come from the injustice and malice of men. Oh, who will repine at being reproached and disgraced before men, when he sees his dear Saviour scourged publicly at the pillar? Who will be tender about his good name, when he thus contemplates the Lord of glory humbled before all His people, His chosen disciples, His beloved mother, as a public criminal, and treated as the basest of men? Nay, rather welcome the ignominy of the Cross, and let it be our glory. Let humiliation and disesteem from men be our preference and our portion on earth, since earth could so debase and outrage the Son of God. Who would yearn for fame and honour, when *He* is covered with reproach and shame?

3. *Affections.*—Present yourself to your beloved Saviour, after this suffering, and devoutly address Him, saying, "My dearest and ever merciful Jesus, who shall recognise Thee, the Lord of Heaven, in this

cruel plight, covered from head to foot with Thy sacred blood, gashed and rent in this frightful manner? Who, dear Jesus, hath treated Thee thus? Who hath had the barbarity to mangle Thy tender flesh in this sort? Oh, if Thy meek silence would allow Thee to speak, if at this moment Thou couldst utter a reproach, Thou wouldst surely answer me in the words of Nathan, 'Thou art the man!' Yes, too well I know it. My sins and foul transgressions have been Thine executioners: they were armed with lashes for Thy blessed body, and heavily and cruelly they laid them on Thee. Wretch that I have been, ungrateful, unnatural, unfeeling! '*Upon Thy back sinners have ploughed*' (Ps. cxxviii.; Heb.); but not merely those representatives of ours who wielded the whips and the rods, but we, we who live; I who now address Thee, in shame and contrition. Oh, this was too much for Thee to endure on behalf of such a wretch! It was too much goodness, too great affection to submit to such ignominies and such brutal treatment. It is a spectacle too distressing even for my

flinty heart to bear. Oh, that it could have been spared Thee! But Thy love knows not the word 'too much.' It is insatiable: it will devour every reproach and shame and torment for us, to save us and to gain us. Blessed be Thou by us all for ever: grant us grace never to think we can requite Thee with too much love. 'Ego in flagella paratus sum,' I am ready, my dear Jesus, to suffer with Thee, whatever Thy Eternal Father shall be pleased to appoint; I will be resigned and patient after Thy blessed example, under whatever suffering shall be appointed for me."

Twenty-fifth Meditation

JESUS IS CROWNED WITH THORNS

Preparation.—Imagine to yourself your Saviour in the midst of the soldiers, and crowned with thorns.

1. Reflect, that after our Blessed Redeemer had been so cruelly scourged, one might have supposed that the smallest remains of humanity in the Roman soldiery

would have led them to compassion; or that mere weariness, at least, would make them cease from torturing Him. Instead of this, having exhausted all the means which the law and the sentence of the judge afforded them for exercising cruelty, they had recourse to their own ingenuity, and followed the suggestions of their own savage thirst for His blood. They knew that Jesus stood accused of calling Himself King of the Jews: they hated the very title, and they determined to make it a source of cruel merriment at the expense of Him who so justly bore it. Wherefore they prepared for Him a new, unheard-of kind of mockery, a crown woven of long, hard, and sharp thorns; this they place upon His sacred head. Then they press it down hard, until its points pierce his sacred skin and flesh. Now see your dear Saviour; how disfigured He appears, how wounded He is, how His brows and cheeks are moistened with His own blood! His hair is all entangled in the knotty wreath, and clotted with the sacred streams that issue from the many wounds which that cruel crown tears

open in His divine head. His fair temples and noble forehead are pressed round by this instrument of torture, which shoots its points into them, and opens in them so many fountains of life, so many sources of salvation that flow from His heart. See how the Blood of God trickles down, first slowly, then in faster and thicker streams, till His blessed face and neck are streaked with it; then it runs down over all His body, mingling with that which wells forth from the gashes inflicted by the scourges. Think what a new additional agony to the smart of His former wounds! His body had, indeed, been lacerated; but the rods and lashes were not raised so high as to His sacred head and face. But now this Divine head also was assailed by a more brutal infliction than had ever been before devised, and suffered its full proportion of racking pain. For, not content with the first planting upon His sacred head this cruel instrument of pain, they from time to time strike it down with a reed, thus changing the direction of its points, or forcing them in still deeper. Oh, which shall most excite

our wonder? the hard and unfeeling barbarity of these wretches, or the patience and meekness of the Lamb of God? See them all around Him, like so many wolves or tigers, mocking Him, taking delight in His sufferings, renewing them every moment by their blows, and shouting in savage exultation at every new device and ingenuity of torment. Then see Him, gentle and unresisting, not casting one angry glance at the most forward or barbarous of His tormentors, not uttering a word of complaint, not even expostulating with them, but bearing all their inflictions with a mildness and sweetness which should have melted and won hearts of stone to compassion and to love. What a pattern, what an example for us to follow! What a lesson for us to learn! What virtue for us to admire and put in practice!

2. Reflect upon the cruel mockery intended and perpetrated in this bloody tragedy. It was intended to ridicule and put to shame the claims which our dear Redeemer had to the title of king, not only over the Jews, but over the entire world.

Could scorn or cruelty go further than this, to crown Him with anything so mean, yet so torturing, as a wreath of thorns? It was as though they told Him that such was the only badge to represent His pretensions, the only fit crown for such a king as He. Suppose the heavens opened at that moment to the eyes of His base and savage tormentors; what astonishment and awe would have seized them, to behold Him seated upon a throne of brightness, outshining the noonday sun; crowned with a diadem, whose splendour surpassed every light that illuminates this lower world; surrounded by legions of bright angels, the least of them invested with a splendour and glory more dazzling than anything earth can show, who are each and all adoring Him, bending before Him as their true King, their Lord, their God! How would these soldiers and executioners, who now seemed to have it all their own way, have cowered down in terror at the sight! Or if their eyes had been opened to see the future, and they had beheld His coming upon the clouds of heaven, in great power

and majesty, attended by a countless host of those same blessed spirits, with that very crown of thorns upon His head, now shining with incomparable brightness, how would they have sunk upon the earth, and called upon its caverns to hide them; or cast themselves at the feet of their Victim, and cried to Him for mercy. We, then, enabled by faith to contemplate these scenes united, we who behold our suffering Lord thus barbarously treated, and who know that our sins did so abuse Him, and yet view Him all the while in glory adored by angels, and crowned with glory, what shall we do?

3. *Affections.*—"What, my blessed and beloved Saviour, but fall down at Thy adorable feet and worship Thee sorrowing? What, but acknowledge Thee before men and angels, as King of the world, and absolute Lord of my heart? What, but in every way within my power, proclaim Thy might, Thy majesty, and Thy glory, and seek every means whereby due homage shall be rendered Thee by men, in reparation and atonement for the cruel ignominy

which men have made Thee suffer? But principally, and with deepest feeling, I will bewail my iniquities, and the many offences against Thy goodness which I know were the real thorns that galled Thee, and tore Thy sacred Head, and imbrued Thee thus with Thy most precious Blood! So long as I can venerate Thy sufferings, and love Thee for having undergone them for my sake, so long will I detest those instruments of their infliction. Yes, do Thou in return, dear Jesus, crown my head as with a wreath of thorns, in sorrowful and sincere compunction, that it may never have rest from grieving before Thee, and remembering what it has cost Thee to save and to gain it. Let the thorns which pierced Thy brow, be ever so many points and goads to my earnest love, constantly to promote Thy honour and that work of salvation for which Thy sacred brows were thus agonised; and may I ever strive to advance Thy claims to be King of all the earth, and to reign in the hearts of all men."

Twenty-sixth Meditation

JESUS IS CROWNED WITH THORNS
(*continued*)

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Blessed Redeemer, after being crowned with thorns, presented by Pilate to the people.

1. Reflect what a woeful spectacle your dear Saviour now presents, gored and rent by the thorny crown which encircles and covers His Head, and draws forth His sacred Blood on every side. But turning your thoughts, for a moment, from the pain He suffers, and that so willingly, for our sake, consider how ungratefully earth made good its curse in His instance. The first Adam was condemned to till and cultivate it, and be rewarded for the sweat of his brow spent in the task by briers and thorns. And so the second Adam, having come down for the true cultivation of this world, by planting in it holiness and truth, and scattering over it the precious seed of His word, was repaid, as might have been expected from its ungrateful soil, by receiving from it, not

in the sweat, but in the Blood of His brow, its natural growth, a harvest of thorns. O earth, earth! object of our love, and of our desires, our idol, our enthralling mistress, even thus dost thou requite those that labour for thee even unto loss of ease, of health, of life. Even thus didst thou repay thy Lord and Master, Him who watered thee and gave the increase. And can I hope for better treatment, if I am faithful and devoted to His ministry? Welcome this, and all else that comes to me from the world, while in such blessed company. But our Divine Lord had in some sort prepared us for such a requital, when, in the parable of the seed, He spoke of the riches and solicitudes of this world as thorns which choke the good seed and destroy it. If, then, He desired to receive from the earth a diadem most expressive of all that it can give, the crown of its universal dominion, He could not better have symbolised it than by this crown of thorns. Yes, when earth has bestowed upon us all the desires of our corrupt hearts, all its perishable goods, its honours, its fame, and

its wealth, it has done no more for us than gird our heads with a circle of thorns, that bear their racking torments even to our pillows, and will keep the weary head from finding repose. Such an emblem, then, did Jesus rightly choose for all that earth could bestow upon Him. But it is not merely the diadem of all the world which He bore upon His head on this His coronation day. He comes not so much to the world at large as to each of our souls. Suppose, then, He had come to win our love, decked out in the splendid array of empire, what could it have added to His dignity? What could a golden and jewelled crown have added of grace and majesty to that brow? What could the rich diadem that David made from the spoils of Melchom (1 Paral. xx. 2) have contributed to the dignity and authority of His sovereignty? Or what additional radiance would a glory of light have bestowed upon the essential splendour of His Divine Person? But when He comes to each of us with a wreath of thorns, assumed through love of us, every jewel of which is a drop of His own most precious

Blood, worth a world's ransom, and moreover a pledge of forgiveness and of blessing bestowed upon us, who will not consider this as the bridal crown of this *Sponsus sanguinum*, this Spouse of Blood, who comes thus to woo our souls, and espouse them to Himself in a contract of unalterable affection? Yes, it is indeed that very crown whereof it is said in the Canticles, "Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy in his heart" (iii. 11). Oh, who will resist such a claim to his affections as this, such a winning plea to his heart? And if His mother Jerusalem showed her cruelty and unfeelingness to this first and best of her children, let us whom He thus willed to espouse to Himself, compensate her wickedness by the ardour of our affection.

2. Reflect how we, who are the disciples of Jesus, are the followers of a King bearing a thorny crown; while they are the enemies alike of His Cross and of His law, who say, with the libertines of old, "Coronemus nos

rosis" (Wisd. ii. 8). Such are the costumes or liveries of the two contending sides; and by them we may as clearly distinguish one from the other, as by their shields and helmets men of old could distinguish a Greek from a barbarian army. When the tempter appeared to S. Martin, wearing a gorgeous diadem, and professed to be Jesus Christ, the Saint detected the cheat, and put the deceiver to flight, by the simple remark that Jesus had His Head crowned with thorns, not with a golden crown. So identified, in the mind of the Saints, was this badge with His blessed appearance. If, then, we follow Him, it will not be when we would add earthly honours to our heads, and crown ourselves with mere human greatness, that we shall be acknowledged as one of His suite; but when with our heads bowed down, and humbled before Him, acknowledging our sins, we have spread upon them the ashes of a sincere repentance. When, girt with ignominy or sorrow, we rejoice to be like Him, abased and despised, then indeed we walk after Him as He wishes to see us, and we are con-

fessed before His Father as among His true disciples. When Heraclius was carrying the blessed Cross, recovered from the infidel, into the Holy City, he found himself unable to proceed, till, reminded by the patriarch that his Saviour, under the same load, was not clad in an imperial robe, nor crowned with gold, but with thorns, he threw off his splendid apparel, and so was able to go forward. And can we hope to pass the gate of the true and heavenly Jerusalem in the character—the only one in which we can hope to be saved—of bearers of the Cross, and followers of Jesus, without a like renunciation, and a like imitation? After such an example, what can be difficult or bitter? Who, if Jesus appeared to him, and offered him on one side a splendid diadem, and on the other a crown like His own, would hesitate a moment between the two? Who would not eagerly stretch out his hand to seize this one, and place it on his head? Who would not willingly resemble Jesus, his Lord, rather than the most magnificent monarch of earth?

3. *Affections.*—"Jesus, King and Lord

of my heart and soul, what crown shall I give Thee to acknowledge Thee as such? Alas! gold and silver in my poverty I have none; my gold hath been long since turned into dross, and my silver been alloyed. I have no roses, like Thy martyrs, who returned Thee blood for Blood; nor lilies, like Thy virgins, who loved Thee with an unsullied heart. My soul is barren, my heart is unfruitful, and I have placed Thee to reign, as the Jewish kings of old, over a heap of ruins. Long since despoiled and ravaged by the enemy, every flower hath been ploughed up, and every green plant burnt with fire, and thorns alone and brambles spring up there. Of these, then, alone can I make Thee a crown, my dear and sovereign Jesus. Wilt Thou accept it? I will pluck up my unruly affections, that they may no more have roots, and weaving them together into a wreath will lay them as a sacrifice at Thy feet. I will gather the thorns of sincere repentance which there each day arise, and prick my heart with a sharp but wholesome smart; and with these will I make a crown for Thy

head, if Thou vouchsafe to wear it. Or rather, Thou shalt take it from my hand, only to place it with Thine around my heart, that it may be daily and hourly pricked to compunction. And may the thorns of Thy crown be to my soul so many goads of love to hasten it forward in its career towards Thee."

Twenty-seventh Meditation

JESUS IS MOCKED BY THE SOLDIERS

Preparation. — Represent to yourself Jesus, after having been crowned with thorns, placed upon a mock throne, and saluted in scorn by the soldiery.

1. Reflect how the crowning of Jesus with thorns was only intended as a preparation for grievous insult, and was part of the scheme of outrages devised by the brutal soldiers. Having thus placed on His head a mockery of a crown, they proceeded to invest Him with other mock insignia of royalty. Over His shoulders, stripped and lacerated, they threw a purple garment, or

something bearing such proportion to the imperial purple as did His thorny crown to an imperial diadem. In a like spirit they placed in His hands a reed for a sceptre, to mock the weakness which they attributed to His rule. Having thus attired Him, they made Him sit down on some mock throne, and then insulted Him by a pretended homage on bended knee; saying to Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matt. xxvii. 29). Before proceeding further to meditate upon these outrages, let us prostrate ourselves in spirit before our dear Saviour seated upon this seat of scorn where His enemies have placed Him. Let us say with true and earnest feeling, "All hail! O King, not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also; Lord of the whole world; above all, King and undisputed Master of our souls. Yes; what they did in scoffs and insults, we do in truth and sincerity of heart. We salute Thee, we bless Thee, we give Thee glory, we offer Thee homage, as willing and devoted servants." Having thus, to the utmost of our power, compensated to our Blessed Saviour the insults He

suffered for our sakes, let us reflect upon ourselves in connection with this treatment. The words which these base wretches uttered were in themselves true: for Jesus claimed, most righteously, the title of King of His nation. He was the son of David, the promised ruler over Israel. The attitude in which the words were pronounced was the only one in which their homage should be tendered; for at His Name every knee shall bow. Yet was there in the whole ceremony an impious mockery and most outrageous insult; since it was not the homage of the heart, but was tendered in mocking unbelief. And what else will be our words of homage, if not inward and deeply sincere—if spoken only through form and usage, and with a divided heart—when we kneel before God in prayer, and profess to worship Him as our King and sovereign Lord, yet with thoughts at the very moment wandering back to His enemy the world—employed on some scheme to obtain its favour, or paying it our court? Will not our professions of fidelity be a mockery and insult? Shall we be accepted before Him as faithful

vassals, and not rather rejected as insulting rebels? When before the altar, on the Body of Jesus being elevated before our eyes, we bow down profoundly, and perhaps address Him with our lips in these words, "Ave verum corpus natum ex Maria Virgine;" while we feel no deep interior faith in what is presented to us, nor that reverence and awe, nor that ardent love, which the near presence of the God who redeemed us should inspire, but rise again, distracted and cold as before:—shall we flatter ourselves that our *Ave* or *Hail* shall be better received than that of the soldiers? Shall we be acknowledged as sincere adorers, and not as insulters of Him, when, robed in the purple of His own most precious Blood, and crowned with ineffable glory, the angels, whom He redeemed not, are worshipping and adoring with their faces on the earth? If the conduct of this Roman soldiery appears to us so ruffianly, may it not be easier for us than we are inclined to imagine, to fall into their very crime, and imitate their insults?

2. Reflect how those wretches did not

confine their mockery to words, but proceeded to further outrage. For, "spitting upon Him, they took the reed and struck His Head" (v. 30). At the commencement of this tragical scene, we are told that "the soldiers" (who had scourged Him) "gathered together unto Him the whole band" (v. 27) to take part in this new device of cruelty. Jesus therefore was given up to the unbridled licence of these malignant men; and had to receive not merely the mock-worship already meditated on, but the indignities and painful wrongs here described. Alas, the meanest of us would not allow His face to be spit upon by the noblest of the land, without reprisal and revenge, which all the world and the laws themselves would approve. Yet the son of David, nay, the Son of God, is impiously spit upon by an entire company of vile soldiers, the refuse of the slave-market or the dungeon: and He murmurs not; He turns not away His face! Oh, the meekness of this Lamb of God! Oh, the greatness of His patience and long-suffering! The least of us, perhaps the humblest of us, would not bear to have a

stick so much as shaken in a menacing attitude over his head, but would wrench it with violence from the hand that presumed so to hold it; and if actually struck, he would think himself justified before God and man if he returned blow for blow. Nay, rather; before the latter, at least, he would hold himself for ever disgraced did he not resent so gross an insult. Yet the Consubstantial of the Eternal Father is not only menaced, but struck on the Head; and upon a Head surrounded and covered by sharp thorns! He complains not; He shows no sign of anger! Oh, incredible love of this dear Saviour towards us! Oh, the intense desire He must have felt for our salvation, to have been willing to compass it even thus! Imagine what an hour of agony this must have been to your dear Jesus! Helpless and abandoned by all, He is the laughing-stock of a troop of brutal soldiers, the butt of all their rude jests and ruder treatment, of their buffets and blows! Never, throughout His Passion, does He so completely appear as the sheep before the slayer, or as the lamb silent before the shearer. Rather.

He is a lamb surrounded by ravening wolves, that already with their eyes devour Him, and open their mouths upon Him, and sharpen their teeth to tear Him in pieces. But He, with hands meekly crossed upon His breast, as though pressing us, the objects of His love, into His heart, with eyes modestly cast down, or raised up in loving resignation towards heaven, turns not away His face from them that spit upon Him, but gives His cheeks to them that pluck them!

3. *Affections.*—"Divine model of every perfection, but here beyond all others of patience and mildness, of gentleness and resignation, I adore Thee! Filled with shame and confusion, I confess before Thee the too great share I have had in these Thy sufferings. Too often, indeed, have I not only crucified Thee, but emulated the mockery which preceded Thy crucifixion, by my outrages against Thee. By my lukewarmness and coldness, when I came before Thee to serve and worship Thee, especially in Thy adorable Sacrament, I have bid Thee *Hail* more in scorn than in faith. When Thy graces have been

most liberally bestowed upon me, I have despised and neglected them; and thus have insulted Thee to Thy face. When my fickle affections, shaken as a reed by every breath, have wavered to and fro, how often have they struck Thee, beating back the words of Thy mouth, as though of no authority with me! But, from henceforth, be it my study and glory not merely to refrain from such conduct, but to procure Thee honour and homage from the lips and hearts of many: to bring many to bend their knees before Thee, and greet Thee their King in truth and sincerity. Especially in the Blessed Sacrament, where that very Body is adored which was so cruelly insulted and maltreated by the impious guards. There will I daily adore Thee, and glorify and exalt Thee, in reparation of all the debasement and pain Thou didst mercifully endure for love of me in this stage of Thy bitter Passion. And Thy angels shall join me with that glorious strain which no doubt they then sang forth to bless and adore Thee."

Twenty-eighth Meditation

JESUS IS PRESENTED BY PILATE TO THE PEOPLE

Preparation.—Imagine to yourself your Saviour brought forth by the governor upon an elevated place, and shown to the people with the words, "Behold the Man."

1. Reflect upon the afflicting spectacle which this public exhibition of Jesus presents to a soul that loves Him. The cruelty and sufferings which He had just undergone had been inflicted publicly enough to make them disgraceful in the extreme, having been inflicted before the whole troop of rude and brutal soldiers; yet they had been endured within the house of Pilate, into which the hypocritical Jews had not entered, for fear of defiling themselves before the Passover. The crowning with thorns and the mock homage which followed it had been unexpected inventions of the brutal soldiery, so that Pilate himself knew nothing of them. When, however, he saw our Blessed Redeemer reduced to so piti-

able a condition, he was himself so struck with the lamentable appearance which He presented, that he determined to try its effect upon the mob; thinking that if pity yet held the smallest place in their hearts, it must possess them at such a sight as this. Instead, therefore, of severely rebuking and chastising the insolent guard for their unwarrantable cruelty, he rather approves, or at least takes advantage of it, to soften, if possible, the flinty breasts of the Jewish crowd. But oh! what an unfeeling expedient is this, and what a degradation to the Son of God does it require! "Behold," he says, "I bring Him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him" (John xix. 4). Who, on hearing this announcement, would not have supposed that Jesus would have been brought forward, if not with such marks of honour as would attest His acknowledged innocence, at least untouched by ignominy and punishment? Instead of this, "Jesus came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment." Here He stood, as on a pillory, to feast the eyes of the unfeeling multitude,

who now understood the long delay which had excited their impatience. How they applaud the cruel ingenuity of the soldiers, who had so well known how to gratify their desires! How they now add their insults to those which the Gentiles have heaped upon His adorable Head! How their appetite for blood, far from being satiated, is whetted by this first taste! Like a few drops of water thrown upon fire, the Blood He has shed inflames their rage to a perfect fury; and when Pilate points Him out to their compassion by those emphatic words, "Behold the Man!" their passion bursts forth in tumultuous cries of "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" (ver. 6). Nothing will satisfy them but that the work of unrighteousness be completed, and the base compliance of the judge carried to the extremity of putting their innocent Victim to a cruel death! Oh, let us who love Him now step in, and for so much dishonour and injustice, offer Him glory and grateful love. Let us see in that crown which He bears, the diadem of our hearts, and in the purple robes, which hide not the wounds and gashes

that dye it once more with a richer purple, the royal mantle beneath which we are protected and hid from our enemies. Let us cast ourselves on our faces before Him, and adore Him for so much sorrow endured for our sakes. Let us acknowledge Him for our dear Master and Saviour, as loudly as those perfidious Jews denounced Him to the judge.

2. Reflect what mysteries, unknown to Pilate, were contained in those two words with which he showed Jesus to the crowd —"Ecce Homo." He meant to imply no more than that, while he believed Jesus to be innocent, he had so far sacrificed his principles to their unjust desires as to bring Him to that pitiable condition. But in another sense how true for us are these words, "Behold the Man!" Till now, it has been the *God* that you have witnessed in Him—miracles, prophecies, voices from heaven, wonderful wisdom, sublime perfection. See now the *man*—deep affliction, ignominy, pain, bruises, and blood. Thus does He love to show you that He is in all things like unto yourselves, only without sin. If

before you reverenced and feared Him as all-powerful, here you may have Him as a brother in the flesh, become such for love of you, and to prove to you how entirely He loved your human nature, that He would needs take it upon Himself, with all its dowry of sorrows and suffering. Or, Pilate perhaps only meant to say, "You do not recognise this person, so sadly altered from what you saw Him a few hours ago. Though even then disfigured with His previous ill-treatment, at least He was recognisable as the teacher so well known in the streets of Jerusalem. Yet I assure you that this is that very man, though His hair be now clotted and dyed with blood and entangled in that thorny crown, and His brow and temples are gored through, and His cheeks begrimed with blood, and His gashed body hardly covered with that purple rag, the mockery of a royal robe. Yes, this is the same person, however changed!" But do not we imagine we rather hear Him (or rather the Eternal Father through Him) say, "This is the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity. Hitherto you have

seen Him and known Him as a master and instructor, calm and mild, yet filled with dignity and majesty, teaching as one having authority, in the temple, the synagogue, or the public thoroughfares. Till now you have called Him Rabbi, Master, Lord. From henceforth know Him by the name of Saviour, by His adorable name of Jesus. For now He hath assumed this sacred character. This is He of whom it is written, that by His stripes ye should be healed. This is He upon whom God hath laid the iniquities of all. Love Him, then, and honour and bless Him eternally for so much mercy and so much charity, which has moved Him to give Himself up to such sorrow and ignominy for you." It would seem as though the Divine goodness had willed that there should be certain pauses or resting-places in the Passion of our dear Redeemer, wherein we might have leisure to look at what He has suffered, and contemplate Him (as it were) without distraction. Such was that long space of three hours during which He hung upon the cross, giving us time to meditate and dwell upon the entire work

of our salvation. Such also is this briefer moment, when Jesus, separated from His cruel tormentors, stands, as in a picture before us, respited for a moment from torture, though not from degradation or pain, that we may take a view of what His preliminary sufferings have been, and to what condition they have reduced Him. Here we may take in at once all that the preceding night and this morning together have done to disfigure and to bruise Him. And as, when a monarch is crowned, He presents Himself to His people to be accepted by them, to be greeted with their plaudits and receive their homage, so Jesus, now crowned, and invested with His imperial mantle, before ascending His royal throne the cross (*regnavit a ligno Deus*), comes forward, in the face of His people, to be hailed by them as their true and everlasting King.

3. *Affections.*—"We, O Divine Saviour, who are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture, greet and acknowledge Thee as our only and sovereign Lord. Live Thou for ever! Live, dear Jesus, in our hearts, and

reign therein, triumphant over all other affections. Live and reign in Thy Church, and in the souls of all men! Thy kingdom come to all! And now permit me to show myself to Thee, with those very same words, 'Behold the man,' that is, the weak, offending, helpless creature for whose redemption Thou hast suffered so much! As such, disdain not to look down upon me, and help me, and raise me up, and strengthen me. And again, turning myself to Thy Father, allow me to show Thee to Him in the same terms. Whenever His wrath is kindled against me, when I find myself offending Him by sin, when the recollection of my grievous and manifold iniquities oppresses me with fear and anxiety, I will endeavour to divert the angry eye of my God from myself, by pointing out to Him Thee, His beloved Son, bearing Thy purple garment and thorny crown. I will say to Him, 'Behold the Man, Jesus, who hath made propitiation for me. Look upon the face of Thy Christ, and for the sake of His dear and adorable Blood, which hath been shed for us, spare Thy people, and me Thy ser-

vant, for whose sake He suffered, and who bless and love Him for so great and exceeding charity.' "

Twenty-ninth Meditation

PILATE WASHES HIS HANDS

1. Reflect how Pilate, a weak as well as wicked man, sought how he could satisfy all parties, and therefore, instead of at once acquitting Jesus, whom he had recognised as innocent, and dismissing the turbulent assembly, temporised and sought by various excuses to make them withdraw their charge. It was evident that something in the conduct and character of Jesus had so far overcome his indifference towards the justice or injustice of the case as to make him desirous of procuring His discharge, provided this could be done without any risk to himself. In this wavering state he is perhaps still more kept by the extraordinary message which he received from his wife. For she sent to him, saying, "Nihil tibi et justo illi. Multa enim passa

sum hodie per visum propter eum" (v. xix.). What was precisely conveyed by these words we do not know. But if during her sleep the wife of Pilate had suffered much on account of Jesus, and that in such sort as to pronounce Him in consequence of it an innocent and just man, this must have preceded the trial, or must have occurred before she had been aware of its taking place. It must have therefore been some supernatural communication, probably concerning the disasters which impended over her house should her husband presume to condemn Him. For the earnest entreaty imported her deep anxiety that her husband should go no further in the case before him, while from her declaring that her vision had been to her one of great suffering, it is evident that not mere love of justice but some painful result was expected by her, if her desire were not complied with. Perhaps she was one of those who, like Cornelius and the Centurion, worshipped God secretly in the midst of an unbelieving generation: at any rate she appears to have been commissioned to

Pilate as Samuel was to Heli, to announce to him the destruction of his house, if he persevered in his iniquitous career. But all was in vain; he had not courage to follow the dictates of common justice, how was he likely to be moved to it by the voice of a woman? He determined therefore to take a middle course, and while he freed himself from the tumultuary accusations of the Jews, and of the importunate threats of their priests to denounce him to Cæsar as no friend of his, he sought to give evidence that he yielded to violence, and rather gave up, than condemned Jesus to death. He does not even pause to reflect that by such conduct he must lower himself in the estimation of all men, and would dangerously weaken his authority and that of his tribunal. But he calls for water, and washes his hands in the presence of the multitude. "Videns autem Pilatus quia nihil proficeret, sed magis tumultus fieret, accepta aqua lavit manus coram populo dicens; innocens ego sum a sanguine justi hujus; vos videritis" (v. 24). Foolish and impious man! to

think that by such an empty ceremony the cravings of palpable justice could be satisfied! to imagine that the retributions of an all-seeing God could be averted by this mock purification! to flatter thyself that the blood of a just man—no matter who (though this was much more), could be washed from thy hands, like a stain of dust, by so profane a baptism! Oh! how easily do we deceive and with our own hands blind ourselves, when our passions take the lead, and still more when we want to make a compromise between a timid and weak disposition and a troublesome or difficult duty. By this want of boldness in Pilate, he is hurried on to final and fatal destruction.

2. Reflect upon the words used by Pilate upon this occasion. In the first place, he applies to Jesus the very expression used by his wife in her message, "*this just man*," as though to show us that this was the cause of such a desire to clear himself of all guilt, having fully comprehended its import. Pilate thus acknowledges Him whom he has condemned to be innocent,

and undeserving of the cruel punishment to which he was dooming Him. What a wretched, what a frightful excess of injustice! In the second place, the close of his address is precisely the same as the priests' to Judas, when he gave back the thirty pieces of silver. "Quid ad nos?" they say to him. "*Tu videris.*" It is therefore a phrase intended to throw the blame upon others, while he who uses it hopes thereby to exonerate himself! But alas! in vain do they thus try to throw the guilt upon one another's shoulders, which their united strength would not be able to bear! Not one among them acts the part of a man conscientiously deceived, or carried away by an honest, though mistaken zeal. In the third place, the entire expression and action bears a strong resemblance to the formulary prescribed in the law, when the body of one slain was found in a district. For the elders of the nearest city were commanded to slay a victim, and wash their hands over it, saying, "Our hands did not shed his blood, neither did our eyes see it" (Deut. xxi. 7).

And by such a declaration that territory was purged of all imputation of the hidden guilt. But far otherwise would it have been, had the words uttered contained a palpable untruth, or had been employed in the very act of delivering into the hands of murderers, the victim after whose blood they thirsted. Such was the case with Pilate: it was by the very words declaratory of his innocence that he authorised the crime of murder upon the very person whom in those words he pronounced virtuous! But let us look well to ourselves, that we allow not within us a similar deceit. We too may be sometimes weak enough to connive at faults or even sins, which we ourselves would hesitate to commit. By our timidity in reproving powerful offenders, by our fear of collision with popular desires or popular opinions, by a sort of weak compromising deference to the errors of others, even by the blindness which advantage to ourselves resulting from the commission of a fault, by some one less cautious than ourselves, may cause, we are often in danger of falling, as Pilate

did, into some sin which it was our duty to prevent, and which we flattered ourselves we should escape because its actual commission was by others' hands. Let us nerve ourselves up to the strength required for the observance of our Master's commands, whatever worldly interests we may have to sacrifice, and whatever opposition we may have to face.

3. *Affections and Resolutions.* — "Beloved Saviour of my soul, whom even the sentence of a wicked judge pronounces innocent, I rejoice to see how iniquity must be against itself to secure Thy condemnation. I abhor and detest the brutal injustice of that wicked man, who in one and the same breath could pronounce such opposite sentiments. But still more do I admire Thy humility and eagerness for my salvation, which could prompt Thee to appear before such a wretch, whose sentence was necessary for the accomplishment of Thy design of love; that, to wit, of expiring upon the cross to redeem me. And as Thou wilt one day be my most righteous Judge, even as now Thou art

my most loving Saviour, so do I now entreat Thee when that day shall come to recall to mind that other day of mercy, and with its merits qualify the rigours of Thy justice. Thou who wast judged unrighteously, judge me, I pray Thee, mercifully; Thou, who experiencedst no compassion, abundantly display it in my regard. And for the better obtaining of this future kindness, open my heart now to the deceits of self-love; never let me be drawn to destruction by weakness any more than by rashness, but let me ever discharge my duty without regard of good or evil report from men, without care for the favour of Cæsar, or terror for the clamours of the multitude. If men misjudge me for acting sternly in the line of duty, I will console myself with the thought that they misjudged Thee."

Thirtieth Meditation

THE PEOPLE'S ANSWER TO PILATE

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Blessed Saviour before Pilate, and the furious mob in the public place below.

1. Reflect how when Pilate made that declaration on which we meditated yesterday, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man; look ye to it," he little imagined that the Jews would have the courage to take the guilt which he disclaimed upon themselves. When two wicked elders had caused the chaste Susanna to be condemned to death, and she was already on her way to execution, the youth Daniel called out with a loud voice, before the multitude, in the very same words as Pilate used, "Mundus ego sum a sanguine hujus mulieris" (Dan. xiii. 43). He who spoke was only a boy, and they who had borne witness were hoary men, held in great reverence, for they were judges in the people. Yet so strong did this determined protest sound even in his

mouth, so solemn a disclaimer of the iniquity about to be committed, and so clear a casting of its load upon others, that the multitude were checked, they paused and asked him, "What meaneth this word that thou hast spoken?" Their rage was calmed, they listened to reason, they discovered the falsehood and malignity of the accusations of their own elders, against one whose superior virtue had been her only crime. What a parallel case was here in the Passion of Christ; but, alas, how different the result! The elders, out of envy of the divine virtues of Jesus, have accused Him of foul crimes, and the people, believing their testimony, have pronounced Him guilty of death. He is about to be led to execution, when a solemn pause takes place in the proceedings. It is not a boy that stops them with his outcries, it is the judge himself to whom they have referred the case; who in the face of the accused, of His accusers, and of the incensed multitude, cries aloud, "Mundus sum a sanguine justi hujus!" Does not the multitude of Israel falter at hearing the solemn protestation?

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Is not their determination to pursue this just man to the cross staggered? Do they not call out, "What meanest thou by this word which thou hast spoken?" No; their blind fury still impels them forward, it overleaps this last obstacle to their impious desires. They clearly understand the import of the solemn phrase, they have no need of asking explanations, they are willing to face all its consequences; and, lest Pilate's scruples on this head should stand the least in their way, they relieve him at once of all his solicitude, they take the entire, frightful burden on themselves and theirs, and cry out with unanimous enthusiasm, as though one only fiend had animated them all: "Sanguis ejus super nos et super filios nostros!" Good God! what a terrible exclamation! Who would make it regarding the most atrocious culprit ever led to execution? Who would not deprecate the stain of blood from being placed upon him, even of one killed by accident, or in self-defence, or in lawful war? And this is now invoked of the blood of that man of whom five days before the same

multitude had said, "Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

2. Reflect how this thundering appeal was admitted in heaven, and the retribution demanded in it fully granted. While the Blood of Jesus fell upon each individual as a dew of grace, expiatory for the sins of that crowd as completely as for those of His loving disciples, yea, for that very sin; yet did it fall as flakes of fire upon the nation and its institutions, blighting them all, and utterly rooting up. The Romans, indeed, came and took their place and nation, and left them an outcast, miserable race. From the moment of our Saviour's death, they knew not peace. The progress of Christianity, in the very midst of the capital Jerusalem; the conversion to it of some of their most influential or respectable members, as Nicodemus and Gamaliel; the constancy of Stephen; the defection of Saul, who became their most formidable antagonist; the miracles of the Apostles; the unanimity and exemplariness of the disciples; the contempt shown for their

menaces and their chastisements; the decline of their own power and influence; the manifest departure of their rule, and the gradual vanishing of their hopes—these were all so many whips and goads to that bitter remorse, which an act of such palpable, but such fruitless injustice, must have caused to the priests and elders. Hence their irritable minds were lashed on from sordid fear of Roman spoliation to reckless rebellion and all the expedients of despair, which brought down on the very generation that had crucified Christ the fearful evils of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. See their entire country laid waste, and its most flourishing towns reduced to ashes by the hands of their own citizens, in their popular tumults; see their armies and bands one after another cut to pieces, or hunted into the clefts of the rock; see in every part, opposite even the very walls of the wretched city, long lines of captives nailed upon crosses, as if to expiate their sacrilegious deed, even as God had the seven children of Saul crucified by the Gabaanites, for his cruelty towards

them (2 Reg. xxi.). Behold then the ungrateful Jerusalem herself straitened by the besieging army on every side, ruined by its repeated assaults, while within, the city itself is more like an abode of demons than men, faction and civil discord driving the inhabitants to tear one another in pieces, and by the sword and the torch to destroy the very bowels of their state. Look how distress increases to hunger, and hunger to raging famine, till every loathsome thing is greedily devoured, and mothers kill their own infants for food. And then comes, at last, the final catastrophe, when the prophecy of Jesus is fulfilled, and the city being taken, is delivered to utter destruction, and the people perish in the conflagration of their own houses, and warriors are crushed under their own defences, and the priests are buried beneath the ruins of their temple. The destruction is final, is utter, is irrevocable! O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! which heretofore didst kill the prophets, and wast pardoned, curse now the day, when with a thousand tongues thou didst call down vengeance on thyself!

Better had it been for thee to have brought down the fire of Sodom and Gomorrah upon thyself than placed the blood of thy God upon thy head! And that second part of the sentence, how has it been fulfilled! Not only on themselves, but upon their children too, did these wretched men call down God's vengeance, and it has come. See them a dispersed, an alien race, without a country, without a priesthood, without an altar, deprived of the sympathies of those among whom they live; given up entirely to sordid gain, without noble ambitions or views of public interest! Never, truly, did a cry to Heaven so completely wrench from thence a curse, as did this appeal of blood!

3. *Affections.*—"Terrible, O Lord, are Thy judgments, but they are righteous and holy. Well was the punishment deserved by that hard-necked and hard-hearted race, which, not content to crucify Thy child Jesus, the Lord of Glory, thus in the face of Heaven boasted of its crime. But have we nothing similar to fear? When we have sinned, when, especially with open eyes, we have

transgressed Thy law, have we not called down vengeance upon our souls, and provoked Thee to visit on us the blood of our redemption, which we thus in some sort trampled under our feet? Oh let us take warning then from Thy people. Let us indeed take up their words and apply them to ourselves, but in a very different sense and spirit. The blood of Thy Beloved Son be ever upon us and ours; upon our bodies to chasten them; upon our hearts to inflame them; upon our affections to purify them; upon our souls to save them! Be it our refreshment in life; our inebriating draught in death; our hope and our salvation."

Thirty-first Meditation

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO THE CROSS

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Divine Redeemer standing before Pilate while he pronounces sentence of death.

1. Reflect how the Roman governor, wearied out with the importunities of the

Jews, terrified at their threats of accusing him as no friend of Cæsar, having satisfied his conscience, as he thought, and discharged from it the weighty responsibility by washing his hands, and by the acceptance of the guilt by the Jews, hesitates no longer to comply with their wishes, and delivers their Messiah to the doom they had demanded. He passes sentence upon Him in judicial form. In that sentence must have been embodied the accusations as proved, which he himself had pronounced unfounded; and as tradition has actually handed it down, it must have pronounced Jesus convicted of sedition and blasphemy, of having plotted against the sovereignty of Cæsar and the religion of His country. Can anything be more iniquitous, more revoltingly unjust? Oh wretched Pilate! till now thou hast been weak and irresolute, deficient in moral courage, and in that bolder uprightness, which at once does justice even in the face of an incensed multitude; thou hast sought to steer between thy duty and thy interests, and hast failed; behold thee now daring enough, in thy very

cowardice, to be unjust in the face of God and man, and of thine own conscience! But to what is it that Jesus is now condemned? For with horror and indignation we before heard Him proclaimed by the Jewish Council worthy of death. But He is now specifically adjudged to that death which the Jews desired to inflict upon Him, when in their fury they cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Jesus is now condemned to the cross, to the gibbet of those times, the most ignominious as well as the most painful of deaths. It is the punishment of slaves and of the vilest of men. Who remembers not how the great Roman orator aroused the indignation of the people against Verres, because he had during his government crucified a Roman citizen? It was considered more than a mere crime, an absolute sacrilege, to have inflicted such a disgraceful punishment. And, in fact, were it not that crucifixion is now sanctified to our eyes, by the person always represented in it being the revered and beloved of our souls; were it not that we are accustomed to look on all representations of it with

tender emotions, there would be something revoltingly ignominious to our sense in the spectacle of a human being, placed high above and opposite the gazing multitude, to die in their sight; not as one executed by a blow, or at once strangled or consumed by fire, but writhing in public through all the agonies of a slow and gradual death, with his arms stretched out so that the convulsions and quiverings of every muscle of the exposed body may be manifested, while his hands, secured not by bands, but by the rude fastenings of iron nails, are unable to give alleviation. It is horrible thus to contemplate him, without one mortal wound, pining and fainting away with hunger, distress, shame, and weariness; to hear him moaning and crying in vain for pity and relief, and behold him, after hours and often days of lingering agony, expire as one would do upon a bed, uplifted in helpless exposure upon that wooden frame! Oh, there is indeed something sickening in this sight of a man, not slain but dying, in the presence of thousands, not one of whom

approaches or discharges towards him an ordinary office of humanity!

2. Reflect, if this be so ignominious, so revolting a punishment, who this is to whom it is now awarded. After all, Jesus must have been considered by the Jews as one who moved in the highest rank of their society, who was admitted to familiar intercourse with their most respectable people, was often at table with the wealthy Pharisees, and taught in the synagogues with learning and effect. He certainly was not of the class on whom such a punishment might be ordinarily inflicted, and we might have supposed that pride and self-interest would have prevented the priests from setting so dangerous an example of thus punishing one of the better ranks. Moreover, Jesus was well known to be of the race of David, of the royal stock; for otherwise the Jews would never for a moment have admitted the hope or possibility of His being their Messiah. Could we have thought it possible that they should have permitted such an indignity to be committed against their kingly family, from

which alone their future fortunes were to spring? Jesus had, at least to all appearance, discharged a great public office of preaching, teaching, and even prophesying. There was a sacredness attached to this character, which might have been rationally expected to extend protection to Him who bore it against such an ignominious doom. But no consideration weighed with these men, whose manifest purpose was to heap infamy on the name of Jesus, and thus ruin the cause and religion which He came to proclaim. Putting Him simply to death was not sufficient in their estimation to blot His memory from the thoughts of men; it would endear Him to many. But crucifying Him, attaching to His name the epithet of *the crucified*, was, they calculated, sufficient to crush His character, and pluck Him from the hearts of His most devoted followers. Who would dare to tell His history, or to whom? To Romans, propose as an object of respect one whom the magistrate of His own nation had condemned to the most infamous end? To Jews, one whom their own priests had judged de-

serving of so hateful a punishment? Yes, angels shall be the first to adopt the title when speaking to Him, "Jesum quæritis crucifixum, surrexit non est hic." Apostles shall glory of it before Gentiles and Jews. "We preach Christ crucified" was their watchword, and the entire world is brought to acknowledge it. From this moment the Cross is ennobled, sanctified; it becomes the ardent object of Peter's hopes, the fond desire of Andrew's life, the glory and honour of Paul's preaching. From henceforward the Cross shall lose all infamy; it shall be courted by the most virtuous of men as a throne is by the ambitious; it shall be placed on sceptres and crowns, as men heretofore have placed a jewel; it shall be the banner of hope, the beacon of light, the token of salvation, the key of heaven. Oh senseless Jews! short-witted fools! who thus, in the blindness of your fury, give additional lustre to the triumphs of Christianity by making them be over the strongest of human prejudices, those against dishonour and public disgrace.

3. *Affections.* — "And Thou, blessed

Lamb of God! how dost Thou welcome the sentence pronounced on Thee as that which puts in immediate prospect the consummation of Thine ardent desires! At once Thou enterest upon that last though painful stage, which secures to Thee, and still more to us, the attainment of the great object of Thy coming hither. Thou art condemned to be lifted up, even as the brazen serpent was above the heads of the people, that we, whom the fangs of the infernal dragon have sore wounded, may, by looking up to Thee, be healed. Thou art condemned to be exalted over all, that so Thou mightest draw all things to Thyself. And shall we not rejoice with Thee that Thine hour is come, yea, our hour too, wherein we shall be brought to salvation and to brotherhood with Thee? Ah! I see by the heavenly smile that shines through the indignities heaped upon Thy blessed countenance how dear to Thee is this cruel sentence; how Thy heart leaps with joy at the announcement it contains. Three hours more, dear Jesus, and we are for ever rescued! Glory and gratitude

and love eternal be to Thee, Victim of our sins, as we join in the song of jubilee and praise with which the celestial choirs above compensated the unjust sentence of men on earth. We adore Thee, we bless Thee, we devote ourselves to Thee with eternal love!"

Thirty-second Meditation

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Preparation.—Imagine that you see your Saviour arrive at Calvary, bearing His Cross.

1. Reflect upon the spectacle you have just represented to your imagination. You see first a mob insulting and furiously denouncing as the worst of men Him upon whose execution they are now about to glut their eyes. Then, as they pass off, you see the bristling array of spears, a troop of Roman soldiers comes into view, and amidst them arrives your dear Redeemer, covered with blood, stiff with His scourging, disfigured with spittle and livid

swellings, torn and mangled by the ill-treatment He has undergone, tottering under the weight of the cross, which He is aided to carry by the favoured Simon of Cyrene. At this spectacle you will surely exclaim, "Truly, now that the Victim is come unto the mountain, the bloody tragedy will end. If the malice of man be not yet satiated, if humanity can have so much of the brute as that these men will not melt into compassion, the Eternal Father at least will surely relent, and provide for Himself another victim, as He did for Abraham in the place of Isaac." But no! the justice of the One is as inexorable as the injustice of the other is obdurate, and nothing can bar the final accomplishment of the stern decree. Follow then diligently this barbarous scene. See this innocent Lamb of God rudely stripped of His clothes before the assembled rabble, and all His wounds opened and rent afresh by the violent manner in which it is done. See how in silence He places Himself, as directed, upon the hard wood of the cross, and stretches

forth His hands. Look, if thou canst bear the spectacle, how one of the unfeeling soldiery places the point of a coarse, large nail upon the palm of thy Beloved, and, by repeated blows, drives its dull point into the wood. What torture, what anguish! The tender flesh is lacerated, the bones crushed, the nerves exquisitely tortured, the tendons cut asunder! The tender frame of our dear Lord quivers in agony at the piercing smart, and draws up convulsively towards the wounded limb. Three more such cruel outrages must be committed against the Blessed Person, three more such murderous wounds inflicted, before the cruel work is done! And were there found men with hearts savage enough to perpetrate this? But hark! hear that shout of savage triumph and brutal delight. It is the people, who, instigated by the infamous priests and elders, are hailing the appearance of our Blessed Saviour above the heads of the crowd, and consider their joy complete. The very fiends seem to join in it; for though they know not fully what will be the conse-

quences to them of this mystery which is accomplishing, they know at least that this is One who has curtailed their power and cast them out of men, and they think they have now succeeded in destroying Him. Oh! what a spectacle is this to one that believes that He, whom that shout greets, is the Son of God.

2. Reflect upon this frightful idea, that Jesus is here before you, executed as a malefactor! The Lord of the angels, and their joy; the Creator of the world, the Eternal Son of the Eternal God; yes, God Himself, He that shall judge the living and the dead, is here upon a gibbet as a culprit! Is not this too dreadful an idea to contemplate? Yet it is the very truth. Has He not now at length reached the lowest pitch of degradation and wretchedness? Has He not drunk the cup of humanity to the dregs? Has He not reached the last verge and limit of our miseries? In His birth He was poor, yea, poor to abjection. Through life He was persecuted even to the seeking of His death. In the previous stages of His Passion, He had

been ill-treated with indignity, and wounded to cruelty; but only now does He appear as infamous! "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree." On a tree is He now hanging. What must the stranger who saw Him thus have thought Him! Not only a criminal, but one of the most desperate character. He is not executed alone. Oh no! So eminent is He considered by those that condemned Him, in the ways of crime, that two thieves, men guilty of great offences, are crucified, one at each side, as if not merely the more to degrade Him, but to show that He was chief among such wretches—far more infamous than they. A passer might say, "What a notorious and dangerous malefactor this must be, that his execution should be insisted on by the rulers of the nation without delay during a time of mercy, such as the Paschal solemnity—nay, even to the profanation of the festival!" And, in fact, even the cruel Herod, when he wished to gratify the Jews by the death of Peter, "videns quia placeret Judæis," kept him in prison "ut

post Pascha produceret eum populo." Not so in our Saviour's case. His execution seemed to admit of no delay, but must take place instantly, even on the day of the Pasch. Moreover, it would be remarked, when ordinary culprits are put to death, a certain feeling of sympathy and commiseration is excited in the hearts of beholders, and at least a respectful silence is observed during the awful scene. But not so here; on the contrary, a universal feeling of exultation and triumph pervades the multitude, and breaks forth from their lips. And yet this is the Son of God, executed as a malefactor!

3. *Affections.*—Run in to the foot of your Saviour's Cross, and, embracing His feet, say, "O my dear, my ever dear Jesus, this is too cruel and distressing a scene for my poor heart to dwell upon. To see Thy sinless, spotless hands pierced and torn by those cruel nails; to see Thy blessed feet, that never moved but on errands of love, fixed to the hard wood by the torturing iron; to see Thee thus raised up to the scorn of a hateful mob,

is a spectacle too dire for even a savage to contemplate. What, then, must it be for one that loves Thee, even as inadequately as I do? Still it is good for me to kneel under the shadow of that atoning tree, and contemplate Thy sufferings. It is good for me to look upon Thy wounds, and reflect why they were inflicted. Yes, this torture was suffered for me, to teach me how I should curse my sins, which brought Thee to it, my Beloved. I detest the brutality of the Jews, and yet forget that I have been as brutal as they, when I committed those offences which caused Thy sufferings. What were those barbarous soldiers in hard-heartedness, compared with me? Is this possible, my God? Can it be true? Oh, then receive the only reparation a penitent heart can make: a loving determination rather to die than to sin again. But this is too little. I will the rather love Thee the more, in consideration of what I have made Thee suffer. Forgive me, dearest Saviour, and I will ever love Thee with my entire heart and soul."

Thirty-third Meditation

THE SUFFERINGS OF OUR LORD ON THE CROSS

Preparation. — Represent to yourself your dear Redeemer hanging on the cross between two thieves.

1. Reflect upon the cruel torments which our dear Jesus must have endured during the three hours He hung on the cross. His body was stretched out upon this hard knotty trunk, for certainly they who prepared it studied little how to make it soft or easy to His limbs. Every sinew and muscle of His sacred body must have been in dreadful tension, both from His position there, and from the effort which nature would make to diminish the pressure upon the wounds of the nails. We find it weary enough to lie for a few hours in one position upon a soft bed; and we cannot bear to remain long without turning, upon a hard board. What, then, must it have

been to hang extended upon this rough tree, especially in the state of our Blessed Saviour's body. From head to foot is one wound; His head, if it press against the cross, is gored by the points of the thorns which are thus driven deeper into it. His shoulders and back, which are pressed necessarily against it, are flayed and torn with the inhuman stripes which have been inflicted upon Him. Against these open wounds presses this cruel bed, so that any change of position, so far from relieving Him, does but increase His suffering by grating upon and rending wider the gashes with which He is covered. But let us not lose sight of those four terrible but most precious wounds, whereby He is fastened on the cross. Each hand, each foot, is transfixed by a long nail, driven into it with violence, and every moment tearing wider and wider the rent it has made. Oh, what a torturing pain, what incessant suffering during the three hours of crucifixion! Who, dear Jesus, shall be able to recount all that Thou didst endure for us in that space of time? But, beyond

these sufferings, immediately inflicted by the act of crucifixion, there were others no less severe, which resulted from it. The uneasy and unnatural position it produced caused a disturbance in all the nobler functions of life. The lungs, surcharged with blood, panted with labour and anxiety, in consequence of the compression of the chest. The heart, from the same cause, beat heavily and painfully, clogged in its motion by the impeded circulation. The blood, unable to return from the head by reason of the veins being compressed, must have caused a painful apoplectic pain. These same causes would produce a distressing heat and irritation all over the surface of the face, neck, and chest, which He had no hand to relieve, and which must consequently have been torturing in the extreme. To these sufferings we must add exposure to heat and air, with a body already wounded in every part, and covered with sores, inflicted by the torments of the preceding night and that very morning. So that not only those parts of the body which pressed upon the cross, but every

other, must have been painfully sensitive, and subject to grievous sufferings. Truly, my Jesus was the King of Martyrs, the severest sufferer the world ever saw, for the sake of men.

2. Reflect upon the many other accessories to the tortures of crucifixion, which our beloved Saviour endured for you. He, the most modest and purest of beings, is exposed before the multitude. He is an object, not of their compassion, but of their absolute derision. He sees before Him an immense crowd, all animated, or rather possessed, by an evil spirit of hatred and scorn to Him. Every word that reaches Him is a word of bitter insult and mockery. Nearer Him, indeed, is a small group of faithful and sympathising followers; but so far from receiving comfort from them, they stand in need of it from Him, and cheerfully He gives it. He commends His Blessed Mother to the care of His beloved disciple John. Peter and His other companions and disciples, the many who followed Him from place to place, have disappeared and hidden themselves from

sight. All that He possesses on earth, His few clothes, even to His seamless garment, are unfeelingly divided or diced for among the soldiers who had executed Him. He is thus alone in the world, without one smallest link with it save His love for man, and His earnest desire to accomplish our salvation. Lastly, He suffers a racking thirst; His parched lips can no longer endure the dryness which afflicts them, and call out for relief. And the cruel men who surround Him present Him with gall and vinegar to drink! Can outrage go beyond this? Could brutality be carried to a greater excess? Now, surely, we may say that all is accomplished; that the anger of the just God has no more dregs left in the chalice of suffering which He had mingled for His Son as the world's Redeemer. Now, be His Name praised for ever, nothing more remains but that death come and put an end to so much suffering.

3. *Affections.*—"O most dear and most merciful Saviour, every meditation upon Thy blessed Passion presents fresh motives of love and gratitude to my poor soul. I

am the culprit, and Thou the Sufferer! I am the sinner, and Thou the Victim! I am the accursed, and Thou bearest my curse! I have been proud, my head has been lifted up in presumptuous thoughts—and Thy Head is therefore crowned with thorns! I have stretched forth my hands to iniquity, and have not restrained them from that which was unlawful; and Thy Hands are therefore fastened with rude nails to the hard cross! My feet have run after vanity, and walked in the paths of wickedness; and therefore Thy Feet are held by the same cruel fastenings, upon the same hard wood! My body has been the rebellious enemy of Thy law, pampered and indulged; and for this Thy sacred Body is gored and gashed with innumerable wounds! My heart hath loved this world, and refused to beat, as it ever ought, for Thee; and Thy sacred Heart was racked with unutterable grief and anguish! Is not this too much? Is it not indeed a rigour of Divine justice? Oh, depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man! But no! Rather let me draw closer to Thee, and to

Thy blessed Cross, dearer to my heart than the golden thrones of earth. There let me ever remain, nor ever lose sight of Thy adorable wounds and bitter tortures; ever to read legibly written upon Thy adorable flesh the deserts of my sins, and still more the declarations and claims of Thy love! Yes, every wound is a mouth that pleads for me to Thy Eternal Father, and contains a powerful plea to win my affections to Thee. I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength. I will love Thee, dear Jesus, my hope, my joy, my salvation; I will love Thee above all things; I will love Thee alone!"

Thirty-fourth Meditation

JESUS ADDRESSES HIS MOTHER

1. Reflect on the completeness of that abandonment which was determined by the inexorable justice of God for His own well-beloved Son. How filled to the brim was the chalice of His bitter sorrows, when

even His dear and blessed mother, instead of being to Him, as she had hitherto been, a source of comfort and happiness, was destined to increase the sufferings and abandonment of His last hour. If there could be a tie between Him and earth which His heart might continue to cherish, it was His love for her who had borne Him, and had loved Him ever since with a love exceeding that of any other created being. If all the world had abandoned Him, she had remained; if the greater part of the bystanders sympathised little, or even rejoiced in His sufferings, she partook of them with a mother's heart of compassion; she alone endured more than all on earth, Himself alone excepted. If few would feel His loss, to her it would be irreparable. That mother, then, He sees at the foot of His cross, overwhelmed with anguish and woe unspeakable. He who reads the interior of His blessed mother's soul, knows what is to her the utter worthlessness of all on earth when He shall be withdrawn from it. What an additional pang to His sacred Heart

to witness her inconsolable grief, and that incomparable distress which made her sorrow great and bitter as the salt sea: "Magna est ut mare contritio tua." What an accumulation of grief to His overwhelmed soul, to leave her thus alone, in fulfilment of the Eternal Father's will! How did their looks and their hearts meet at that hour! How was all the affection of both, if possible, renewed; and how did they melt into one loving thought in the fierce furnace of their common sufferings! How did Mary remember the happy days when He was an infant in her bosom, and when she heard His Divine words, sitting at their homely meal and amid the daily occupations of Nazareth! and how did Jesus remember the cherishing love with which this tenderest of mothers had nursed and caressed Him! Here was, indeed, depth calling upon depth, one surpassing, superhuman grief upon another. Still Jesus cannot leave this earth without making some provision for the future welfare of the loving mother who had taken care of

Him for thirty years. Gladly would He take her with Him into His glory, and bear her as the first present of earth to heaven. But this consolation shall not be; for He would then have expired with one pang less than was compatible with the stern decrees of justice. No; He must have the pain of knowing, as He expires, that He is leaving her whom He loves beyond all to loneliness and straitness, and to the care of others. And though the support of her lonely life be His own beloved disciple, yet it is indeed a sad exchange for her to have the disciple in place of the Master, the creature for the Creator, the son of Zebedee instead of the Son of God.

2. Consider the blessed words which Jesus spoke, for thou hast a deep interest therein. First, looking down from His cross on the mother who stood beneath it, He said, referring to John, "Woman, behold thy son;" then to John, "Behold thy mother." Here was a new relationship established, wherein it was intended that we should all have a part. For, as

the Church of God has always believed, in John we were all represented; and so Mary was made our mother, and we were made her children. But as this relationship will form, in due season, matter for its own meditation, let us keep our attention to what Jesus here did. Keenly then did He feel the distress and desolation of the exchange He was making, while He indicated to the already crushed heart of Mary, John for Himself! But if to *her* heart the words necessarily brought such desolation, see, on the other hand, how lovingly they were addressed to us the while. Now, even in the depth of His afflictions, did He devise new blessings for us, and appointed new aids to our salvation. He bestowed on us this mother, this tender, loving mother, this compassionate and merciful mother, even while He was suffering the most excruciating torments for our sins and ingratitudes! His death was drawing near; He had given us Himself, He was just about to seal the donation by expiring; another bequest still remained for Him to leave us, better,

nobler, more valuable than anything else, after the gift of Himself. He had adopted us as His brethren in regard of His Eternal Father; He had made us co-heirs with Himself of the Kingdom of Heaven; yet He would have our relationship to be even closer still, and willed us to be His brethren in respect to His dear mother, one family with Him, where our feelings can most easily be engaged in favour of our kindred. At the same time, who can refrain from admiring the steadfastness and fortitude of the heart of Jesus, thus discharging His duty as a Son, amidst the most agonising torments of body, exhausted by His wounds, and oppressed in spirit by an unspeakable weight of woes. How amiable, how perfect is every line in the character of this our dear Master and Saviour, whether in life or death!

3. *Affections.*—"And how shall we ever sufficiently thank Thee, dear Jesus, for having thus made Thine own sacrifice, no less than Thy loving mother's loss, our gain? What a motive for gratitude to

Thee and to her, to have found a place at such a moment in both those hearts, to have been considered worthy of mention upon Calvary, amidst the mutual sorrows of Son and Mother! And here, surely, all the gain was mine. For she did but acquire in me a froward and undutiful and often rebellious child, whereas I obtained a tender and most watchful parent, who through life has been my patroness and kindest friend, ever making intercession for me most effectually with Thee. But let me never forget what this adoption cost Thyself. Never let me forget that to establish it Thou wert pleased to bring Mary to the foot of Thy cross, piercing her soul with the sharp sword of grief, which recoiled on Thine own, wounding deeply Thy filial heart; that for three hours Thou didst allow Thy cruel torments to be aggravated by the sight of her inexpressible dolour, that so she might conceive us in sorrow and pain, and might thus have a stronger maternal interest in our salvation. Blessed be Jesus and Mary for so much love. Blessed above all, Thou,

my dear Jesus, for whom no suffering seemed too much, which could give us any further blessing!"

Thirty-fifth Meditation

THE PENITENT THIEF

Preparation.—Represent to yourself your Saviour upon the cross between two thieves, one of whom reviles Him, while the other defends and pleads for Him.

1. Consider the indignity meant to be heaped upon the Blessed Jesus, by crucifying Him between two thieves, as though such were the fittest company for Him, and as though He had well earned the post of infamy assigned Him between them. But He, in His mercy, well knew how to turn this intended dishonour to His own glory; first, by the fulfilment of prophecy, which had foretold that He should be reckoned and associated with the wicked, "et cum iniquis reputatus est:" and next, in the salvation of one of those who were joined with Him in punishment. And oh! what

an honour, what an opportunity of grace was here given to these infamous malefactors in their last hour; as much as Jesus was abased by being joined with them, so much were they exalted by thus suffering with Him. The two sons of Zebedee asked to sit one at His right hand, and the other at His left, in His kingdom, and were refused; those two wretches were admitted to the honour, even now, when on His throne of grace, His mercy-seat as King, and King not only of the Jews, but of all mankind, purchasing and making them His inheritance. Who would not have bought this distinction (without their crimes) at the price of their sufferings? But what an awful lesson we have here in the difference of the fate which befell the two. For it pleased God to show forth, in the very hour of salvation, how all men were necessarily to belong to one or other of two different classes, the chosen and the reprobate; and while He exhibited the first-fruits of life, plucked from the very tree of the cross, He gave the very first example of final reprobation upon that very instru-

ment of salvation. It should have appeared impossible for any one, in that terrible moment, to have had room in his heart for cruel or inhuman feelings, especially towards the companion of his sufferings. The same fate involved all three; death was certain to all; there was no ground to hope that the sentence of a Roman judge, especially so justly pronounced against two of them, would be reversed, and the delinquent taken down from the cross, in reward for pandering to the passions of the Jewish rabble, and joining in their reproaches to the One unjustly condemned. What motive, then, could have impelled one of the two malefactors to blaspheme and taunt Jesus in that dreadful state, with the miraculous appearances around them of a darkened sky and nature in mourning? What but the deepest perversity of nature, the most hardened impiety, the most obdurate malice? What a proof have we here of the frightful length to which a corrupt heart may go in wickedness and impious presumption!

2. But let us turn from this more painful

contemplation, and dwell rather on the consoling spectacle which the other side presents us, in the conduct of the penitent thief. He, touched by grace, and feeling this to be an hour of mercy, first publicly rebuked his fellow for his blasphemy, acknowledged his own guilt and demerits, and proclaimed the innocence of Jesus before His enemies, at a time when even His Apostles had abandoned Him. Then he turned to his Saviour, and, making the strongest act of faith imaginable, thus addressed Him: "Domine, memento mei, cùm veneris in regnum tuum." To have acknowledged a hope in Christ's kingdom, while He was held in public estimation and honour, and while He was working signs and wonders, was considered an act of strong belief and trust. What was it then, when Jesus was stretched upon an infamous cross, publicly blasphemed and taunted for weakness in not being able to rescue Himself from destruction, and now just about to expire? What a lively and strong faith was needed, to ask Him now to remember any one in His kingdom? When Joseph

entreated the chief butler, who was the companion of his punishment, to remember him "when it should be well with him," because "innocent he had been cast into the dungeon" (Gen. xl. 14, 15), he only prepared for himself a bitter disappointment; for he put his trust in deceitful man. But this good thief, acknowledging himself most justly punished ("nam nos digna factis recipimus"), and still making a similar request, is sure of its not being neglected; he knoweth in Whom he hath trusted, and that He was both able and willing to grant him his request. How foolish, truly, must it have appeared to those who overheard it, for one sufferer nailed to a cross of shame and agony to ask another "in the same condemnation" to remember him in His kingdom! But how wise, how sublime the petition to the ears of faith! For mark the answer which, in the midst of our Saviour's agony, it drew from Him: "Amen, dico tibi quia hodie mecum eris in paradiso.' He does not say, in My kingdom; but in paradise—in immediate happiness, in the possession of all that bliss whereof souls

were capable, till the gates of heaven should be opened after forty-three days. Judge what must have been that poor thief's joy and happiness upon hearing these blessed words! how his heart must have beat with delight at the tidings; "in domum Domini ibimus!" He, a few hours since a culprit before God as before man, an abandoned wretch, became in one moment a vessel of election, the first-fruits of redemption, the first saint of the new Covenant! How light do all his torments now appear! How he blesses his cross, which in the bitterness of his agony he had cursed when his impending execution was announced to him! How he studies to copy, for the few moments of life that remain to him, the Divine Model placed before him! How meek is he become, how resigned, how patient, how forgiving! The sculptor could not copy more accurately the cast before him than he does the blessed Type at his side; each upon his cross, as brethren now, as loving friends! How he welcomes the cruel strokes that break his limbs in order to despatch him; having seen Jesus expire, he longs to

hurry after Him, that there may be no delay in the fulfilment of His promise! Never, surely, was repentance more complete, or its fruits more blessed than here. And why should I not hope for as much, if I make mine as sincere, as courageous, and as entire?

3. *Affections.*—"I will draw nigh, then, to Thee, adorable Jesus, upon Calvary, and there, at Thy side, will I crucify all my evil desires and inordinate affections. The appetites of the flesh, the irregular attachments of my heart, the dangerous curiosity of my senses, the pride and ambition of my spirit, my whole self, the old man, transgressor of Thy law, and evildoer, shall be nailed to the cross. Then, with hands stretched out, I will cry to Thee for pardon, and for a place in Thy kingdom, among those who, headed by the good thief, have entered through the gate of repentance, and have been allowed to mingle songs of gratitude for forgiveness with the notes of praise which angels and saints unblemished ought alone to sing. One day, I know, we must all appear on Thy right hand, or on

Thy left, as the two thieves were placed; but let my choice have first been made beside Thee expiring to redeem me. Into the arms of Thy clemency I cast myself at that hour; to those Hands that were pierced for me I commit my lot; to those lips which even gall could not embitter, I trust my sentence. I have sinned; inflict on me what punishment Thou wilt, it will be less than I deserve; but I will call upon Thee aloud, I will entreat Thee with all my heart, and Thou wilt not refuse to receive me to mercy: I may wait long, if such be Thy good pleasure, before I have my answer such as the good thief had; but the hour will come when Thou wilt give me a benign assurance that the tears of a long life have been heeded, and the prayer of years heard. And when the voice of men is no longer audible, and the sleep of death creeps over my senses, and the recollection of a sinful life, and the terrors of hell affright me, I shall hear Thy sweet and gentle Voice say to me from the cross I have loved, 'Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.'"

Thirty-sixth Meditation

JESUS THIRSTS

Preparation.—Represent to yourself the Son of God extended upon His cross, and suffering all His divine and redeeming agony.

1. Reflect how Jesus, "knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst" (John xix. 28). Many mysteries were contained in this exclamation. First, it is an evidence that Jesus suffered in all truth and reality the torments of crucifixion, and did not by the strength of His divine power prevent or even diminish them. For, seeing how through the rest of His Passion no expression of suffering escapes Him, men might have been tempted, as some ancient heretics were, to deny the extent of His sufferings. But we know that among the grievous torments of crucifixion this of thirst was one of the most severe; and we have evidence that He felt what

others, in the same situation, usually did feel. But if others cried out from the agony of thirst that it might be satisfied, not so did our Divine Lord; but rather that thereby He might endure another infliction from the malice of His enemies. For by way of mocking His thirst, as it would seem, they had prepared, instead of the usual beverage afforded on such occasions, a vessel filled with vinegar and some bitter ingredient. This they present to His lips, only to embitter and disgust the palate of the Divine Sufferer. O Blessed Jesus! when will the malice of these brutal enemies be satisfied, and when shall the ordinary feelings of humanity vindicate their ascendency over cruelty and wanton hatred? Who would refuse a draught of water, or of wine, to one that was enduring so severe a pain, and asks for it? If to him who gives it to the least of Thy disciples a reward is promised, are they indeed men who, having here an opportunity of doing as much for the Master, passed it by? What an honourable name in the Church of God, and what

a glorious place in His kingdom, would the man have obtained who should have given Jesus to drink when He thirsted upon the cross! Heaven might have been purchased in that hour for a cup of water! But it was necessary that the Scriptures should be fulfilled. For the royal prophet had long before written of Him: "Dederunt in escam meam fel, et in siti meâ potaverunt me aceto" (Ps. lxviii. 22). Every other part of prophecy regarding His life and Passion had been accomplished: His hands and feet had been pierced, His bones numbered, His garments divided; His friends had abandoned Him; He had been reckoned with the wicked. This alone now remained, to fulfil all things; and therefore, when He had tasted the proffered potion, He exclaimed: "Consummatum est;" for nothing remained but to expire. How careful, then, was our Lord to inculcate in practice what He before had taught; "Iota unum aut unus apex non præteribit a lege donec omnia fiant . . . non veni legem solvere sed adimplere" (Matt. v. 18, 17). Small as that

portion of His sufferings might seem to be, insignificant as was a drop of gall in the ocean of bitterness which overspread His soul, yet would He delay the termination of His sufferings till it had been poured into His cup. It was indeed that last drop which made it overflow: after it there was no room for more. But though, to fulfil the prophecy, it was necessary that this loathsome beverage should be offered, and though He allowed its taste to affect His mouth, yet was it not necessary that He should partake of earthly food, as though He needed it to strengthen Him through His sufferings. Thus did He remain, through every extremity of pain and torment, even to the moment of death, steady and true to every principle of rectitude and to every point of duty.

2. Reflect on the more mysterious import of this word—the *last* spoken by Jesus upon the cross, before He commended His spirit to the Eternal Father. "Sitio." After what did He thirst? Not after the water which when one has drunk he soon thirsts again, but after the living and im-

perishable waters which spring up into life everlasting. He thirsts after justice; that is, after the justification of the entire world. In this word was summed up the long series of desires and efforts during thirty years of silent aspirations, and three years of marvellous actions, and a day worth all the years since the creation of the world. It was the epilogue of His labours for man. It was the expression of what He had most at heart for our good. By it He desired that sin and vice might be extirpated among men; that the long reign of hell and darkness might be destroyed; that the whole earth might bring forth fruits of holiness; that the reign of God might triumphantly be established, and His blessed Will everywhere accomplished. Alas! and in this His last dying wish for man, was He doomed to disappointment? When He uttered it, did He know that the malice of man, for whose redemption He was dying, would frustrate all His desires, and bring His earnest wishes to nought? Oh! was not this disappointment—a feeling to which we generally attach the epithet of

bitter—more truly so than the gall which that sponge placed to His lips? But not only for the salvation of men in general did Jesus thirst, but for mine in particular; as He did for that of each among us. He had now done all to accomplish my redemption. He had offered for it the Victim of infinite price: it was laid upon the altar; the stroke of death, which could be delayed but a few moments, was alone wanting to complete the oblation. But much, He knew, was to depend upon myself; and for this much He thirsted and longed. How have I repaid Him? how have I hitherto pretended to slake this His thirst? Ah! have I offered Him the sweet satisfaction of a good and virtuous life from my infancy? have I been a solace and a joy to Him? Have I not rather offered to Him, again and again, a sour and bitter return, setting His very teeth on edge by my ingratitude, and being most distasteful to His palate by my relapses into transgression? Have I not been as cruel and unfeeling to Him as ever were the Jews, or the Roman soldiers, who so unworthily

replied to His complaint of thirst? But, oh, let this never be again. Let me never repeat what this day gives me so much pain to remember; but strive to be a comfort to the Heart of my suffering Jesus. By my contrition and love, by my devotion and zeal, I will repair the past, and not only accomplish in myself that after which in me He thirsteth, but strive to assist likewise in advancing that salvation of others, that sanctification of the world which He longed for on the cross. But there was still another object after which the sacred humanity of Jesus thirsted, and in this, blessed be God, He was satisfied. "Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad Te Deus. Sitivit anima mea ad Deum fontem vivum; quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei?" (Ps. xli. 2). He was now leaving this ungrateful world: His Heart yearned to be delivered from its evils; and He longed to bear this our human nature to the right hand of the Eternal Father,—to be "glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was."

In this at least, O Blessed Saviour, Thou wilt not be disappointed; this Thy thirst shall not be slaked with gall and vinegar, but with the torrent of delights, with the excellent inebriating chalice of Thy Father's house. There shalt Thou at length be as Thou ever oughtest to be, honoured and glorified, blessed and praised, by all Thy servants.

3. *Affections.* — "Let us, then, Divine and beloved Redeemer, begin from this moment to prepare for that our future occupation. No more disappointment from us, no more bitterness, no more cruel outrage! Thou hast already suffered too much, for us to go on adding to Thy sufferings. But if Thou hast thirsted for us, make us in return thirst also for Thee. Parch and dry up in us all the corrupted sap and nutriment of the old man, and make us burn with thirst after the refreshment of the new. Consume in us all self-love and self-seeking, and torment our inmost hearts with an ardent thirst for the conversion and salvation of others' souls. Wither down within us the world which

hath flourished there so long; and let our souls be as thirsty earth without water to Thee. Dry up in us all the concupiscences of the flesh, and let it languish after no joys but those pure ones that are to be found in Thee. 'Sitivit in te anima mea, quam multipliciter tibi caro mea.' Let us ever thirst after the fountain of living waters,—after that stream, clear as crystal, which flows through the heavenly Jerusalem, and which Thy blessed martyr Clement saw issuing from beneath the foot of the Lamb, that is of Thyself, who alone canst satisfy the craving appetite of our hearts."

Thirty-seventh Meditation

JESUS SEEMS TO BE FORSAKEN BY HIS FATHER

Preparation.—Represent to yourself our Blessed Saviour hanging upon the cross and crying out in a loud voice.

1. Reflect how Jesus had, with few exceptions, been abandoned by men from the

very commencement of His sufferings. But the comfort which they could give Him was but small compared with that which He derived from the love of His Father. It is indeed impossible for us to form any adequate idea of the happiness and brightness which, throughout His life, beamed upon His soul from the consciousness He possessed that His Heavenly Father loved Him, and regarded Him as His well-beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. The persecutions of men had been cheerfully endured, under the supporting feeling that all their calumnies and ill-usage were counterbalanced, and much more, by the approbation which His conduct under them, and at all other times, drew upon Him from Heaven. He lived in a close, uninterrupted communication of affection with the Eternal Father; far purer and sublimer than those of the most exalted heavenly intelligences. It was reserved, therefore, for the last finishing stroke of His torments, for the seal of the great work of sorrow and of salvation, that this His last source of happiness should seem to be dried up, that His only

remaining joy should be withdrawn, and His day be turned to night, His sweetness to wormwood, His music to mourning. Even as a dark cloud overspreads the heavens, so that to the eyes of the beholders the sun becomes darkened, though in itself the light is not diminished, so did a gloom ten times more impenetrable come between the Sun of righteousness and the Soul of Jesus, and overcast, as it were, the serene heaven of His divine mind. And of what is this dark and dismal mist composed? Of the sins of the whole world: those myriads of destructive locusts which consume all the greenness of the earth; of the murky and pestilential exhalations of this ocean of iniquities which reeks up to the eye of Heaven; of the countless enormities of the entire world, which He has taken upon Himself, and which now truly seem to rise above His head, so that He cannot behold the face of Heaven. And though, in truth, the brightness of the complacency of the Eternal Father still shines upon Him as serenely as ever, yet the cheering view of it is interrupted by this worse than Egyptian darkness which hangs over

His most blessed Soul. Hence He seems to Himself as one no longer pitied by Heaven, any more than by earth; and all the portents of nature appear to Him the signals of a Divine resentment against one charged with the iniquities of the entire human race, rather than mourning for the innocent Lamb who taketh away the sins of the world. Why is the sun darkened? It seems as though it could not brook to shine upon such an accumulation of guilt? Why does the earth at His feet reel and stagger? It is as though it can no longer bear the burden of iniquity which presses on it from the stem of His cross, and writhes in impatience to be rid of the load! O most merciful Jesus, what a blank appears Thine own Heart to Thee, what a barren wilderness Thy Soul! Well mayest Thou say to Thy Eternal Father, "Anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi!" Not a drop of the dew of Thy mercifulness comes any longer on it to refresh it; it is parched and scorched with utter desolation: there is not a pleasant spot left in it; all is abandoned to dismay' to terror, and dejection! Oh, the suffer-

ings of our Blessed Lord must indeed be nearly consummated when they have reached this pitch, that Omnipotent Justice had left nothing more to take from Him but life!

2. Reflect upon those words by which Jesus in His agony of sorrow gave vent to His feelings. "Eli, Eli," He exclaims, "lamma sabacthani?" ("My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken Me?") He does not now, as a few moments before, address God as His Father, as when He prayed for forgiveness for His executioners. He seems to feel that He no longer acts towards Him as a loving parent, but as a stern, inflexible judge; and therefore addresses Him by that name which, in the language He spoke, was understood to express this character. He repeats the invocation twice—"My God, my God," as those do who are earnest indeed, and overpowered with anguish. He at the same time recalls to the memory of those who heard Him that remarkable prophecy, the minute description of His Passion, which is contained in the psalm whose first words He quoted. There is a peculiar strength, too, in the word here chosen (or

rather copied from Him, though in point of time anticipated) by the prophet: "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" As though He had said, "That men, who are fickle, and mere broken reeds, should have abandoned Me, cannot be surprising; but that Thou, whose dutiful Son I have ever been, shouldst thus desert Me, doth indeed overwhelm Me with sorrow and desolation. That the world, to which I have ever been opposed in maxims and practice, should in the end have rejected Me, was to be expected; but that Thou, whose will I have adored and faithfully performed, shouldst now cast Me off, does indeed bring utter darkness on My soul. That I should have looked on My right hand and on my left, in vain, for a compassionate friend, was natural for Me, who am not of this world; but that I should raise up Mine eyes to heaven, and there find no one to take My part, is indeed the consummation and uttermost excess of sorrow and bitterness." Such is the language in which Jesus seemed to express this last of His sufferings. Oh, how severe, how poignant, must it have been, to wring from His pious and loving

heart such words of remonstrance! Let us completely pass over the stupidity or obstinacy of the Jews who exclaimed, "*Eliam vocat iste*; let us see if Elias will come and take Him from the cross." But let us rather adore in awful silence the wonderful mystery of redemption which was to be accomplished by such unexpected means as this seeming abandonment of the well-beloved Son by the well-pleased Father. Let us learn, too, some idea of the rigour of Divine justice, when exercised against sin, by seeing to what degree its severity could be carried against Him who undertook its atonement. Let us detest sin as it deserves to be detested by all who love their Saviour, Whom it reduced to such extremity of misery, compared with which all the inflictions of the executioners were accounted by Him as nothing. And, oh, let us affectionately sympathise with Him amid so much desolation of spirit, such darkness and seeming abandonment by His last and chiefest trust!

3. *Affections.*—"Alas, desolate Heart of Jesus! who shall attempt to offer Thee consolation when Thine only true stay and

comfort hath been withdrawn? Who shall pretend to offer it refreshment, when the heavens are as brass to it, refusing the smallest kindly drop of moisture? What would any consolation we could offer be to Thy soul! bitterer than to Thy palate that nauseous potion which one of the crowd, placing on a reed, would fain have offered Thee when Thou hadst invoked Thy Father! Accept, then, rather our earnest desire to make Thee all the reparation in our power, for the grief and mortal anguish which our sins caused Thee at that moment of severest trial. Accept the offer of humble and afflicted hearts, which we now presume to make Thee. Receive their lowly homage, their sincere devotion, and their earnest desire to gladden Thy Heart by forwarding to the utmost of their power the work Thou comest to accomplish here below. But above all things, through this portion of Thy bitter sufferings, through the desolation which Thou didst feel upon the cross, and the dereliction of Thy soul, grant, we beseech Thee, that our last hour may be sweetened with Thy choicest consolations;

that in that dread moment we may see Thee, who didst suffer to purchase our peace, comforting and encouraging us, and Thy Eternal Father inviting us to receive the fruits of Thy Passion. Make the terrors of death to flee from us; break down the power of our infernal foes; and, turning our couch in our sickness, scatter the freshness of Paradise round our suffering bodies and minds; that with the image of Thee crucified pressed to our lips, we may die in Thy embrace, and be received in the next world in Thine arms. If by Thy wounds we were healed, and by Thy stripes our scourges were removed, so by Thy dereliction let us be comforted in death, and by the desolation of Thy last hour be ours filled with hope and cheerful confidence in Thy loving mercies and the merits of Thy death and Passion."

Thirty-eighth Meditation

JESUS EXPIRES

Preparation.—Represent to yourself our Blessed Saviour bowing down His head, and giving up the ghost.

1. Reflect how the Divine Jesus, having completed His heavenly mission of reconciliation and mercy; having fulfilled to the last tittle the law and all justice; having performed to the letter the will of His Divine Father; having given the most perfect example of every virtue, and delivered the sublimest doctrines; having suffered all possible indignity, outrage, and pain; having in fine fully discharged every engagement to God and to man, save what the act of His death had to accomplish, summed up all this in those two last words, "Consummatum est." "My work is done, I have come to the end of My earthly day's task: and I am now, as in the beginning, only thine. It is time that I return to Him that sent Me." Oh, who else that

has arrived, since our first fall, to this strait and final pass, could have spoken the same words, and thus declared in the face of Heaven, that He had accomplished all that He had come into the world to do? Here for the first time is closed a life without blemish or imperfection, without the smallest transgression of the smallest precept, but glorious by the completest possible union with God, by perfect love! Yet, even so did not Jesus, our model and exemplar, wish to quit this world, before He performed another act of homage and duty towards His Heavenly Father, that so we might understand its great importance. "Father," He exclaimed, "into Thy hands I commend My spirit!" Not in fear or doubt were these words spoken, as if He could for a moment be uneasy respecting His acceptance by His dear Father, but He wished to leave us an example how none should presume upon even an entire life devoted to God, when the hour is come for surrendering our souls to Him, but that we must commend ourselves to His mercy with all earnestness

and humility. Now, Jesus having thus to the last moment of His life instructed us, not forced by any law of necessity, not conquered by His sufferings, but of His own free choice yielded His spirit. He hangs down His head, towards earth, as if to give to it a last kiss of peace, He closes His eyes as though it were to a gentle slumber, and His thrice-blessed soul is separated from His body. There is no savour of death in that pure flesh, no dominion of corruption over it. No distortion of features, no contraction or contortion of limb disfigures this corpse, lovely even in death, and worthy of the great holocaust which in it has just been offered. But not so is it with nature, astounded at the great act here accomplished, and indignant at the outrage committed against her Maker. Every part of her frame thrills with horror and dismay. The sun, abashed at the deeds that day perpetrated in its light, withdraws its rays, the earth is shaken, the graves open, and the bodies of many arise, and the Old Law, through its type the temple, gives way before the New which opened for man the

sanctuary of heaven. Such is the death of Jesus, worthy of His life, worthy of His divine character!

2. Reflect upon the changes which took place in every part of creation at that instant when the soul of Jesus passed over His lips. In that moment the work of redemption was complete, the seal was set to the greatest of all God's wonders, and all its fruits were secured, and all its rights brought within our possession. But first see what a change is wrought in the world, by the loss it undergoes. Only a few minutes before, it held within it the greatest of treasures, the person of the God-man. It was as His tabernacle, His shrine, and nothing created else could be put in comparison with Him. Now it possesses Him no more, it has lost Him for ever, as a living man treading the ordinary paths of humanity, and what is worse, it has itself wilfully and wickedly deprived itself of Him. It has not merely lost Him, it hath slain Him! How dreary must the earth now seem to angels, and to all good men that understand what has happened, how

little worth conversing or living in! It is like a temple or a palace that has been sacked and rifled by an enemy, and all its desirable things carried off and lost irretrievably: its gladness has fled, and they find in it no more comfort. But at the same moment, hear what a commotion is stirred up below, when the brazen doors of the temporary receptacle of the Just of the Old Covenant fly open, and an unwonted light breaks the gloom of that ancient prison. The tidings which have reached them from day to day have prepared them for the so joyful event, but now that it has come, how they break forth into a hymn of jubilee, a "Hosanna to the son of David, and blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" which celebrates the triumph obtained over the power that held them in thraldom. But upon this mystery of the descent into hell we shall have occasion more particularly to meditate. Let us rather turn our eyes to that deeper dungeon, that house of woe and gnashing of teeth to which this nobler captivity is for a time an appendage. In the long and

hideous howl of agony which bursts from the infernal tenants of that place, we may learn the value of the prize snatched from their jaws by the event which has just taken place. During three preceding years they had seen with dismay their power greatly curtailed, and the dominion which they had exercised over the bodies of men thwarted and almost destroyed. Again and again they had been forced to acknowledge Him who imperiously commanded them, as the Son of the Living God. But still they knew not the full measure of His dignity or might, and hurried on the blinded Jews to that last catastrophe, by which they had hoped to destroy His power. Now therefore, to their utter dismay, they discover that the death which they had plotted, and succeeded in inflicting, had been their utter ruin, that in expiring, Jesus had completely crushed the serpent's head, that had laid snares for His heel. They had pursued Him, the true Son of God, with the same mad indiscretion as Pharaoh had the people of Israel, His adopted children, into the very jaws of death, thinking that in those

straits He could not escape their vengeance; but they had found, as in the former case, the gulf close only on the pursuer, and the destruction only fall on the intended destroyer. Death is now swallowed up in victory, its sting is plucked out, and the grave is deprived of its prey! And still more, hell sees its kingdom overthrown, and its victims snatched for the future from its grasp! But man! Oh, in him is the great, the vital change: for *he* is redeemed! In that instant in which the breath of Jesus ceased, the chains fell off the hands and feet of the captive of four thousand years, he returned to the possession of a long-forfeited inheritance, his attainder of ages was reversed, and he reentered into the privileges, with the title, of a child of God, having place in His eternal Kingdom. Now lift up thy head, high but fallen creature, great indeed to have been thought worthy of such a purchase! No more art thou condemned to the outward darkness, but thou art invited into the inner apartment, the wedding-feast of God's Son; no longer art thou abandoned

to the devices of a corrupt heart, to idolatry and superstition, but thou shalt cast thy idols away to the bats and moles, and shalt say, "Let us come and ascend to the mountain of the Lord." For a new era is come upon the earth. Wherefore doth it tremble, but that it feels the throes of a new birth? Wherefore are the heavens darkened, save that beneath the veil new heavens are creating? "Ecce nova facio omnia," saith the Lord: and "in those days, I will create new heavens and a new earth." A dew till now unknown hath in this hour fallen and fertilised the barren world, reversing the curse on Adam. Grace hath been poured out with open hands, yea, in a twofold stream it hath flowed from them during the last three hours, forming a treasure which no time can exhaust. The many sacrifices of the Old Covenant have lost their efficacy; the morning and evening oblation are wanted no more; type and figure, like the light of stars and moon, have disappeared before the splendour of the real Sun of truth and righteousness; and the New Law, with its unfailing sacri-

fice, takes possession of the world. The great and fundamental mystery of atonement is in existence, the sublime doctrine of the incarnation and death of the Son of God finally established, all the promises are accomplished, and man has no future to look to but heaven.

3. *Affections.*—"Rejoice then, O earth, and sing thy loudest praises to the God that made thee. For behold He hath removed thy shame, and hath clothed thee with gladness, and crowned thee with mercy and compassion; no more art thou accursed, since the Blood of that Divine Victim hath flowed upon thee: the very thorns and briars which thou wast condemned to bring forth have been changed before heaven into lilies and roses, since they have sprung from a soil so watered! No longer shalt thou be reproached as barren, since the Cross bore upon thee its precious fruit, more savoury and more wholesome far than the tree planted in the midst of Eden! And ye, O children of men, forget your forty centuries of darkness and of dismal horror, for your light is come: remember

not your long captivity of ignorance and infernal tyranny ; for the hour of delivery is arrived, and the oppressor's staff is broken for ever, and the arm of your taskmasters is withered ! Ye are a free, a purchased people, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation ! But to Thee, dear Redeemer of our souls, what shall we say ? Behold, Thou hangest upon Thy cross, a lifeless corpse ; and have we any right to exult and rejoice as long as Thou art in this state, and that through our faults ? Yea, dearest Lord, for it hath pleased Thy immense goodness to have it so, and make our gladness spring out of our sorrow. We will love Thee the more for this, blending together our compassion and our shame with our joy and triumph, for by Thy death upon the cross Thou hast redeemed us, and hast made us Thine own for ever."

Thirty-ninth Meditation

ON THE CONDUCT OF THOSE WHO WERE PRESENT AT THE CRUCIFIXION

1. Reflect how unequally the spectators of our Blessed Redeemer's death were divided into two classes, the one a very small body of dear friends and faithful followers, the other an immense multitude of strangers who had little or no sympathy for Him, or of enemies who were only inclined to exult and triumph in His sufferings. Let us meditate this day upon the conduct of both, drawing, from the evil and the good, wholesome instruction. The sufferings which Jesus endured were such as might have drawn pity from rocks, and had an irrational creature been made to suffer them, no man with a heart in his bosom could have refused to pity it. Moreover, a crime committed under the influence of passion generally rises up against the feelings of the committer of it the moment the paroxysm is over. Love is turned to

hatred after it has led to an excess, and hatred often into love. Judas, who had withstood all the kind remonstrances of his Master while his horrible crime and its reward was in prospect, cast away this, and loathed the other when the deed had been perpetrated. But the Jewish priests and their obsequious rabble knew no such tenderness and flexibility of heart; as they began, so they persevered. With deadly hatred they commenced, and in deadly hatred they watched the consummation of their work. Even when a criminal has been pursued by justice to death, there is a mournful solemnity in the triumph of public virtue over crime, which admits of no exultation. The person of the unhappy is always sacred. But now consider the behaviour of the men who looked on Jesus crucified. "They that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Vah, Thou that destroyest the temple of God," &c. In like manner also the chief priests and ancients, mocking, said, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save" (Matt. xxvii.). And so when He called on God in the Hebrew

tongue, "Eli, Eli," they affected to understand that he called on Elias to save Him! Now let us imagine those men acting in such a manner while the sun was darkened, and all nature manifestly protesting against their black crime, and sympathising with the innocent sufferer! Yet on them all this makes no impression, they continue their taunts and insults to the last! Nor does it appear that, when the last catastrophe came, when the earth reeled with a terrible earthquake, and the rocks were riven in twain, and the graves opened, the hearts of these men relaxed from their obduracy, or began to tremble and repent. For even after witnessing those awful phenomena, they dared call Him to Pilate an impostor, "seductor ille." Good God! to what lengths will not passion, after hoodwinking reason, lead men, even till it have hurled them over a fatal precipice. What an awful instance have we here of this worst form of blindness!

2. Reflect, however, now upon the more consoling spectacle of the few who joined not in this unfeeling conduct. As of the

two that hung upon the cross with Jesus, one was taken and the other left, so from among those who had taken part in the atrocities of that morning, the mercies of God selected such as should be first to taste those fruits of redemption which had just ripened upon earth. "The centurion," first, "and they that were with him watching Jesus" (that is, presiding at His execution), "having seen the earth quake and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying, 'Indeed, this was the Son of God'" (Matt. xxvii. 54). "And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts" (Luke xxiii. 48). With too many, indeed, this was probably but a passing emotion of terror that vanished with its cause, but to multitudes, no doubt also, it was the beginning of a change of heart and of life, and the first steps to their becoming faithful disciples of Him, dead, whom living they had rejected. Oh! how bitter to one of those must the regret have been to the end of life, of having seen Jesus in the flesh, only to

persecute and maltreat Him, and to have waited till it was beyond his power to repair what he had done before he acknowledged Him! How overcome with shame and confusion must he have been if, travelling into distant countries, he was interrogated by the disciples as to what manner of man the Lord Jesus was, and under what circumstances he had seen Him, and what intercourse he had had with Him, and was obliged to own that he had refused to know Him till He had expired, and that, in consequence of his vociferations among others, upon the ignominious cross: for his only conversation with Him had been in those cries of "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" and "Non hunc sed Barabbam!" But there are others standing here who will have no such reproach to make themselves. At a little distance are the pious women who have followed Him from Galilee, ministering to Him, who have courageously followed Him amidst the insulting mob from Pilate's court to Calvary, weeping loudly over His unjust treatment. And now that He expires, how unrestrained do their sobs break

forth, how they wring their hands, and bend to the ground with anguish unspeakable. Nearer still stands a more choice group, Mary Magdalen, Mary of Cleophas, and others privileged by relationship or peculiar love to draw so nigh. But conspicuous beyond all are Mary and John. Into the feelings of those chosen souls who shall attempt to enter? Who shall presume to imagine to himself the tumult of affectionate grief that tossed their hearts, and made them unconscious of all else around?

3. *Affections.*—"To this small knot we will attach ourselves, we will not heed the taunts and scoffs of the hardened soldiery or of the brutal priests. We will ever stand by the side of John and of Mary, of our brother and our mother, and through their feelings contemplate the great mystery of love that hath just been accomplished. Much shame must, indeed, be mingled with ours, much contrition which they could not feel. Too great a share had I, dear Lord, in Thy crucifixion; too plainly, I fear, do I belong to the crowd, not to be repelled by those purely loving friends, and refused

place among them. But no: they are too meek and kind to treat me thus; they will allow another penitent to stand where Magdalen is admitted. With those who love Thee, dear Jesus, I join my heart and affections, and give Thee my entire self for ever. By the homage of a loving and penitent heart I desire to compensate Thee for the blasphemies and scoffs of Thy unfeeling enemies. Worth but little indeed is what I offer Thee, but given Thee at such a moment, in such a place, Thou wilt not refuse to accept it."

Fortieth Meditation

OUR SAVIOUR'S SIDE IS PIERCED

1. Reflect upon the vain superstition of the Jews, who, straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, as they had done throughout the Passion, scrupled about allowing our Saviour's body, as well as that of His companions, to hang upon the cross during the Sabbath. They therefore requested Pilate to give such orders as would prevent the

profanation of this day. This niceness of the priests regarding a legal observance was wisely permitted by Almighty Wisdom for several important purposes. First, the work of Redemption, for which the cross had been chosen, being accomplished, it was right that all the ignominy of its punishment should be ended. It was not becoming that our dear Saviour's body should be allowed to hang, like a malefactor's, upon the cross exposed to vain curiosity or derision, for days, as was the custom. From the moment He expired, the season of suffering was done, and that of glory begun. Any further infliction after that moment, of infamy or reproach, could have purchased nothing more for man, nor have added anything to the merits of redemption. Therefore, the trembling earth, the darkened heavens, the rending rocks, the divided veil, the resuscitated bodies, and the converted centurion are the first signs of that glorious period which was begun when Jesus yielded up His spirit. Secondly, this vain scrupulosity of the Jews served to make the fulfilment of two prophecies much more striking. For among

the rules in eating the Paschal Lamb, as eminently typical of our Lord's death, one was to refrain most carefully from breaking any of its bones. "Os non comminuetis in eo." The applicability of this image would hardly have been perceptible had not Jesus been placed in such a situation, as that, humanly speaking, it should have appeared almost necessary that this should have happened. The priests, therefore, having prevailed with Pilate to allow the bodies to be taken down after only three hours' crucifixion, a time ordinarily not sufficiently long to cause death, it became necessary to complete the execution by the *ictus gratiosus*, or death-blow, whereby the legs of criminals being broken, their death was accelerated. And accordingly this was done to the two thieves at the right and left hand of Jesus. It was natural to expect that as much would have been done to Him, but He had prevented the stroke, having already expired. And thus was the prophecy or symbol fulfilled in Him, contrary to the probable course of things. The soldiers respected evidently the body of one

whose death had been attended by so many wonderful signs, and would not wantonly commit an indignity upon it. But one of them, whether compassionately to assure himself of His sufferings being at an end, or from some other unknown cause, pierced His side with a lance, and thus gave fulfilment to another prophecy, "videbunt in quem transfixerunt;" a prophecy which without all this concurrence of circumstances could not have been fulfilled; as this transfixion did not enter into the sentence or into the customs of crucifixion! But lo! the wonderful appearances that ensue! From that wound, inflicted upon a corpse, there issues a copious flow of blood and water, evidently so clearly distinguished as not to be explicable upon mere natural grounds, and worthy of receiving from the faithful eye-witness John a special attestation, with strong asseverations of the truth of his testimony. It is not, as to a natural phenomenon, that he turns our attention to it, but as to some mysterious and mystical event, having its own peculiar and interesting meaning.

2. Reflect how, in fact, there is much for

the mind and heart to be interested in, in this last wound inflicted upon our Divine Redeemer. For He was anxious that the price of our ransom should be so fully paid as that He should have reserved nothing of it for Himself. Now that price was His Blood, and although one drop of it was sufficient, He desired to give all that He had of it. Now the chief wounds hitherto inflicted on Him had been on His hands and feet, by the nails, which did indeed produce a copious effusion, as did also the crown upon His head, and as the lashes had done upon His back, but they could not well drain, in so short a time as three hours, His sacred Body. It was necessary at once to break open the reservoir in which this precious treasure was chiefly contained, that so its riches might flow in ample streams upon the earth. That Blood which the very nature of crucifixion concentrated and imprisoned in the breast and heart must be poured out, that so man might have every tittle of His purchase. But this was not all. Was it right that His sacred head should be gored with thorns, His blessed

members pierced with nails, His adorable flesh gashed and torn, but that His heart, the seat of love, should bear no seal of that deed of ransom? that His breast, on which we, His brethren, shall recline in the banquet of His love, should have no scar to testify to eternity how tenderly He loved us? And was that our sanctuary to be kept closed against us? Were His Passion and death to make no passage for our affections, whereby our hearts might creep in, and bury their sorrows, their anxieties, their trembling fears in the loving heart of Jesus? Should we have been left without the means of warming our faith, enlivening our hope, and inflaming our charity at that very hearth and altar of every hallowed sentiment, whereon the holocaust of salvation was mystically immolated before it was slain upon the cross? Of how much mystical delight, of what tender emotions, of what ecstasies of charity would not those saints have been deprived, who have loved Jesus crucified above all things, had their affectionate devotion been confined to the contemplation of His mere outward wounds, and had not been

able to find in them a way whereby their love could penetrate to His sacred heart, object above all others of a Christian's veneration and tender affection? But moreover, the Church has always wished us to consider another mystery, of more general interest. Death was to our Blessed Lord, our second and better Adam, what sleep was to the first; and as from the latter's side His spouse Eve was formed, so was the spouse of Christ, that is, His Church, mystically brought forth from His side, when after His death it was pierced by the lance. For by the mixture of blood and water was, in some sort, signified that mixture of good and bad who compose the visible body of Christ here below. But besides, we have here the two Sacraments represented, upon which our sanctification and the application of our loving Saviour's death and Passion mainly depend; to wit in the water, the laver of baptism, whereby we are cleansed from original sin, and the adorable Sacrament of the altar, in which we partake of His precious Blood. And as by these two Sacraments we may be said to belong to

the Church, inasmuch as by the one we are admitted into it, and by the other we are kept in communion with it, as its very name implies, we may easily see how in the issuing of their emblems from this sacred, open fountain of grace, the Church may be said to have been produced.

3. *Affections.* — "When Thy Apostle Thomas doubted, Thou wast pleased, most Blessed Saviour, to convince Him by inviting him to place his hand into this wound of Thy blessed side. Thus didst Thou not allow this source of mercy to be closed up, but, once open, it remains open day and night for us to have recourse to in all our necessities. Yes, it is through Thy wounds that we are to have access to Thy heart, capacious enough as it is to contain us all, with all our necessities. Let it be to us a refuge in all our perils, a sure retreat in all our straits, as the cavern of Odalla in which David found safety from his pursuer, or as that into which Thy prophet retreated in Horeb to hear the consoling voice of God. In seasons of distress I will therein hide my head, sure that in that safe asylum no

enemy shall be able to hurt or to annoy me; none shall presume to violate that sanctuary; or to drag me thence. And let *my* breast, too, dear Jesus, be wounded, in the likeness of Thine, by love. Let it ever be open to the inspirations of Thy grace, affording a harbour to good thoughts, while it gives no room to any that could displease Thy loving heart. And finally, through this mystery of the blessed Passion, give me an inviolable attachment to that holy Spouse, my Mother, who came from Thee in such an hour, and in so mysterious a manner."

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